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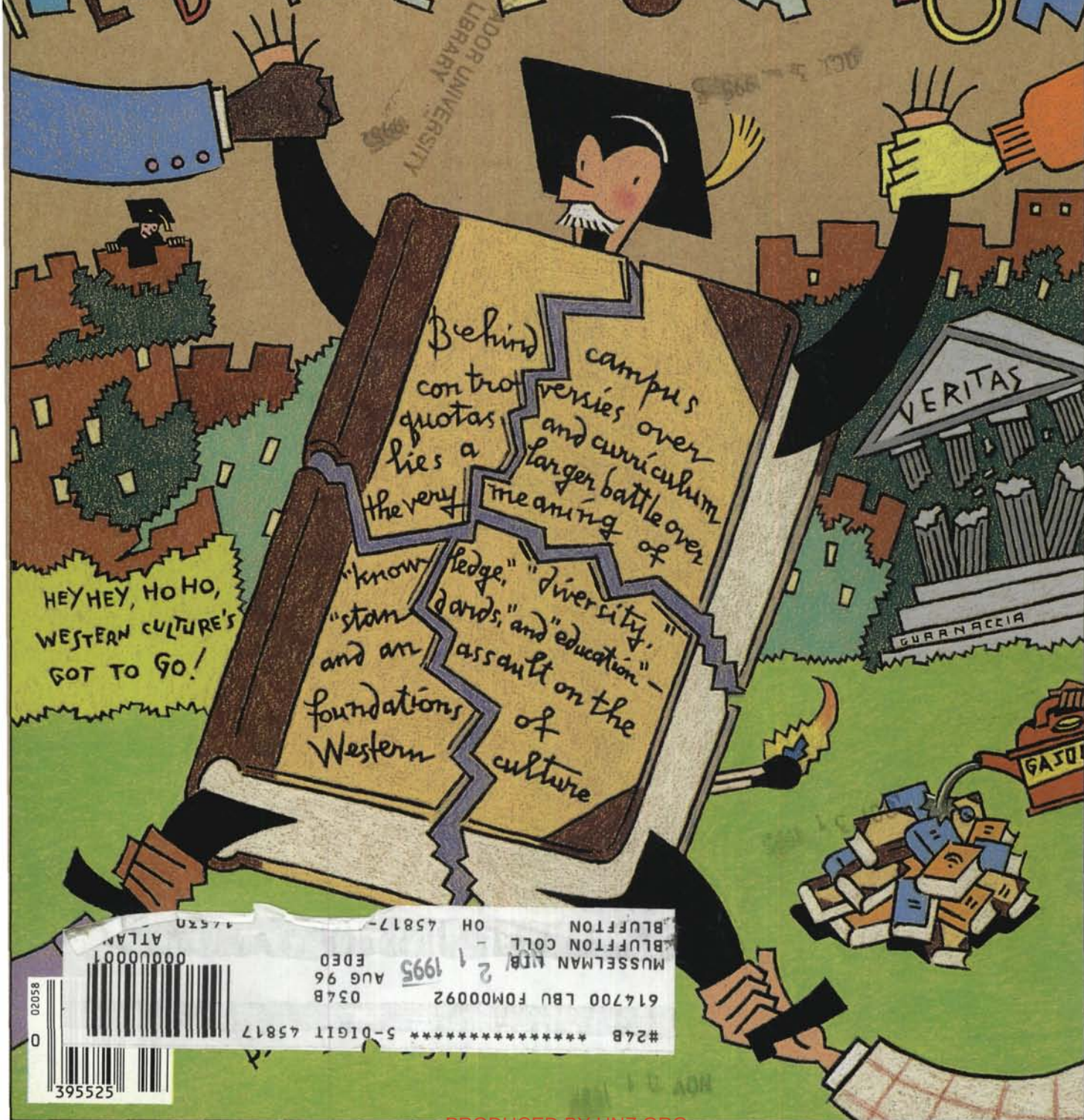
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THE DEATH OF BROADWAY / WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE GHETTOS

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"Grown-ups tell us, 'Just say no.' That's easy for them to say."

"Maybe they forgot what it's like.

"At parties, at school, kids are saying to try this or do that, and they're my friends. I mean how many times can I hear I'm a loser.

"Sure I'm scared of drugs. It's just there's so much pressure. You want to say no. But you can take a lot of heat for it."

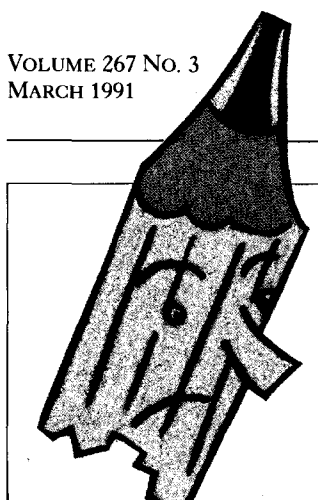
Simple yes-no decisions aren't so simple when they involve kids and drugs.

That's why IBM has helped develop a computer-based, interactive video program that's now in schools. It simulates realistic social situations, and allows kids to make choices—about drugs, about alcohol, about themselves—and to experience the consequences, but without getting hurt.

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To learn more about this program, write to us at IBM, P.O. Box 3974, Dept. 973, Peoria, IL 61614.

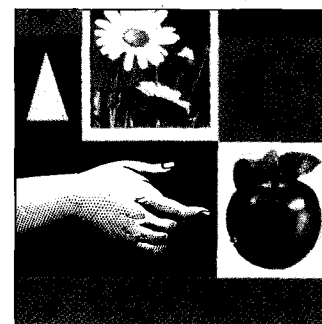
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HEALING THE GHETTOS
The idea that government can't do much to help the nation's inner cities is widely taken for granted. It is also wrong, the author argues: we know enough now to know what we need to do—and we must do it.
by NICHOLAS LEMANN

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A web of laws and regulations has been a boon to American archaeology—and has turned it increasingly into a business venture.
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51 ILLIBERAL EDUCATION

The heavily publicized racial confrontations on several college campuses in recent years are mere symptoms of deeper and more pervasive changes—changes in the intellectual and moral infrastructure of the American university. These changes involve not merely race relations or social relations of other kinds but the very substance of the curriculum, the nature of learning, and the meaning of knowledge. "Instead of liberal education," the author writes, "what American students are getting today is its diametrical opposite, an education in closed-mindedness and intolerance."

by DINESH D'SOUZA

92 THE DEATH OF BROADWAY

For the audiences that once supported them, Broadway shows have become a once-a-year splurge. During the next decade, the author believes, the Great White Way will become "a graveyard for great white elephants, as, one by one, the thirty-six theaters left in the Broadway area find themselves unable to attract either shows or audiences."

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ALTHOUGH THE LETTERS in every issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* afford a glimpse of what some of our readers think of the magazine's recent contents, what we cannot show—or at least cannot show very often—is the response that comes not in envelopes but in newspapers and magazines, and over the airwaves. The articles and other material published in *The Atlantic*—from the most serious cover stories to the smallest items in the Almanac—give rise every month to scores of news stories, columns, reviews, and broadcast interviews and commentaries. Evidence of these comes to us every few weeks in the form of a small mountain of clippings and transcripts.

One recent article that received an especially high volume of media coverage was Bernard Lewis's "The Roots of Muslim Rage," which went to press last July, before the invasion of Kuwait, and appeared on the newsstands in August, as Saddam Hussein's armies massed along the Saudi Arabian border. *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Evening Sun*, and a dozen other newspapers referred readers to the article for background. "Required reading," a columnist wrote in *The Los Angeles Times*, echoing colleagues elsewhere.

Lewis's article was a primer. Michael J. Barrett's November cover story, "The Case for More School Days," was meant to be a catalyst for discussion, and that it was. The

wide coverage accorded Barrett's article revealed sharp disagreement—reflected also in our mail—over the wisdom of lengthening the school year. *The Boston Globe* followed up on the article with an approving survey of efforts around the country to extend the school calendar. The syndicated columnist Colman McCarthy was not impressed. "Calls for a longer school year," he wrote, "are like parents lengthening the time for the family's dinner. If there's little or nothing to eat, why bother?" Look for the debate to continue.

The words in this magazine are not the only elements that elicit comment. *The Washington Post* began its review of Karl Zinsmeister's June article, "Growing Up Scared," with a tribute to the cover art (a painting of a lunch box riddled with bullet holes) and the illustrations inside (scenes of urban mayhem drawn by inner-city schoolchildren in response to *The Atlantic's* request that they depict life in their neighborhood). "Strong symbols these," the *Post* writer commented, "to illustrate the strong medicine Zinsmeister delivers about how to protect a whole generation from the vices and violence of drug dealers and other thugs."

Finally, *USA Today* recently put *The Atlantic* on its list of magazines that it recommends for gifts. You can always find telephone numbers to call for gift subscriptions at the bottom of our contents page.

—THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

MARY WARD BROWN ("A New Life") is the author of the collection of stories *Tongues of Flame* (1986), which received a PEN/Hemingway Award for best first fiction.

THOMAS M. DISCH ("The Death of Broadway") is the theater critic for *The Nation*. His play *The Cardinal Detoxes* was produced in New York last year. Disch's most recent books are the novel *The M.D.: A Horror Story* and a collection of poems, *Dark Verses and Light*. Both books will be published next month.

DINESH D'SOUZA ("Illiberal Education"), who was a senior domestic-policy analyst at the White House during the Reagan Administration, is currently a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. The article in this issue of *The Atlantic* is adapted from his book *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, which will be published this month by Free Press/Macmillan.

JAMES FALLOWS ("Vietnam: Shut Out"), *The Atlantic's* Washington editor, is writing a book about the future of East Asia.

STEVEN GUARNACCIA (cover artist) is an illustrator whose work has appeared on book jackets, magazine covers, posters, and T-shirts. Guarnaccia recently illustrated *Senile Felines*, a palindromic calendar for 1991.

ANDREW HUDGINS ("In the Game") teaches English at the University of Cincinnati. A new collection of his poems, *The Never-Ending*, will be published in May.

NICHOLAS LEMANN ("Healing the Ghettos") is a national correspondent for *The Atlantic*. Lemann's article in this issue will appear in somewhat different form in his book *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*, to be published this month by Knopf. The book grew out of reporting initially done for *The Atlantic*.

MICHAEL LYDON ("Raw Truth and Joy") is a musician and writer who lives in Manhattan. His book *Rock Folk: Portraits From the Rock 'n' Roll Pantheon* (1971) was republished last fall.

W. S. MERWIN ("Cover Note") won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1971 for his book *The Carrier of Ladders*. His many

other books include *The Rain in the Trees* (1988) and *Selected Poems* (1988).

CULLEN MURPHY ("Archaeology: Pay Dirt") is the managing editor of *The Atlantic*.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR., ("The Harry Hopkins Affair") graduated from Harvard University in 1938 and taught history at Harvard from 1946 to 1961. He then became a special assistant to President John F. Kennedy. He received the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1946, the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1966, and National Book Awards in 1966 and 1979. Schlesinger's numerous books include the first three volumes of *The Age of Roosevelt* (1957–1960), *A Thousand Days* (1965), *The Imperial Presidency* (1973), *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (1978), and *The Cycles of American History* (1986). He is currently at work on the fourth volume of *The Age of Roosevelt*.

The March Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere, on behalf of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Ted Moncreiff; Alliance for the Wild Rockies; and Kittie Verdolini-Marston, of the University of Iowa.



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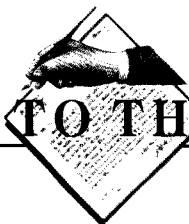
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



AMERICAN SEMINARIES

The evidence that Paul Wilkes presents in "The Hands That Would Shape Our Souls" (December *Atlantic*) squares with my experience as a theological student, minister, and lifelong active participant in organized religion. Today's seminarians may well be what the author calls an indicator species, signaling finally and decisively the end of religion as a personal and public force in America.

Wilkes does not say exactly whether he feels such an outcome is to be desired, but I gather he does not. For what reasons, I am not quite sure. I am rather confident, however, that his vision of what a cleric must be in order to succeed, as presented in his last two paragraphs, is not likely to become fleshly reality. Indeed, I doubt that God herself would meet the author's requirements, especially the ones not to remind us of our shortcomings, since "we have been flogged enough," and to "see the goodness in us that we have yet to unleash."

PAUL W. KELLAM
Interim Minister
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Melbourne, Fla.

Isn't it outrageous that lesbians and gays at seminaries want to have a voice in governing their schools and churches! Why, if this keeps up, women will want the right to vote and blacks will think they can run for President! I understand that Paul Wilkes is only passing on to us the feelings he encountered in the course of his seminary visits and interviews, but his piece is rife with the notion that liberal seminary education in America is about to collapse. Seminarians ask questions and test roles because they're going to spend their lives asking the questions we won't, and testing the roles we're afraid of. The very heart of religious faith is the search for meaning, not the establishment of a

doxology. Anyone can learn to say mass or perform a bris.

PAUL A. H. BABITTS
New York, N.Y.

Paul Wilkes's dreary report reflects none of the joy and deep satisfaction in the lives of clergypersons as I've known them intimately over six decades.

I am disappointed, moreover, that one who submerged himself in this environment for so long should still call our God "he."

CAROL HOLLE UMBER
Los Angeles, Calif.

Re "The Hands That Would Shape Our Souls": I do not recognize my own school, or many of those in which I have taught. Yes, the evidence is there for the case of disarray that Paul Wilkes seeks to make, but seminaries are far more diverse than his selective observations and citations suggest.

Some research I am doing on the teaching of theology in seminaries confirms my experience of both the diversity of schools and the "reason for the hope" of a Katarina Schuth. With regard to the hope, a strong trend in the recovery of the basics is discernible, along with an unremitting commitment to relevance. Studying the systematic theology syllabi from schools across the country tells me that the comment about the temptation of seminary teachers to be "a brilliant faculty of agnostics" is patently absurd. If anything, we have to be concerned about a flirtation with neotribalism in which the fundamentals of faith can only be construed according to one's tradition, rather than ecumenically.

GABRIEL FACKRE
Andover Newton Theological School
Newton Centre, Mass.

The cruel parody written by Paul Wilkes of the class he attended given by Professor Katie G. Cannon, at Episcopal Divinity School, shows that



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either he did not do his homework or some of the things that were said hit some raw nerves.

To suggest that the analysis of the power structures that keep racism, classism, and sexism in place is simply therapeutic is an indulgence that only one who is not affected by these evils can afford. For those of us who have to be sensitive to the predicament of those who are marginalized if we are to be effective ministers and priests, this course is essential.

REV. PETA RUTH BLAKE
Cambridge, Mass.

Katie Cannon's theological analysis of specific social structures is serious scholarly work. Paul Wilkes dismisses it as unscholastic because he objects to an analysis of specifics characteristic of feminism, and wants a transcendent ethic that "[brings] out the moral dimension of life" in conceptual generalities. Cannon's teaching is academically challenging because she expects her students (and teaches them how) to investigate their own experience in society, however difficult to grasp and painful to confront; to explore these issues in sizable reading assignments (a book a week); to analyze in both discussion and writing; and to listen to the many voices both in class and in our world, however diverse.

Her pedagogic method is profoundly dialogic. After an hour and a half in her class Wilkes dismisses her as insufficiently "scholastic," and her students as inappropriately emotional. Because of Wilkes's patriarchal model, he has misread students having fun, being supported by teacher and fellow students, and expressing appreciation for the class. Since no one was dominating, he mistakenly assumed that the class lacked academic integrity.

R. MELVIN KEISER
*Professor of Religious Studies
Guilford College
Greensboro, N.C.*

Paul Wilkes wants clergy who will "[bring] out the moral dimension of life, and not only the politics of the left wing of the Democratic Party or the right of the Republican, masquerading as religious belief." Wilkes's lament, which masquerades as objective journalism, appears to be a reaction against the liberation theological commitment that infuses the work of such compe-

tent and productive scholars as Katie Cannon and Episcopal Divinity School.

THE RIGHT REVEREND
OTIS CHARLES
*Dean and President
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.*

Paul Wilkes writes that "only Reform Judaism and two smaller groups, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism, have a national policy that authorizes ordaining people who are actively gay."

While that statement may be technically true, the polity of the United Church of Christ is such that actively gay persons may be, and indeed have been, ordained to the Christian ministry, and maintain their ministry in good standing.

REV. DAVID M. SEYMOUR
*Holland United Church of Christ
Suffolk, Va.*

Although Paul Wilkes's analysis of the problems with which seminaries and seminarians are confronted is clear and cogent, his conclusion reflects the difficulties facing those who seek to deal with them.

His assertion that "they must not drive us up still another wall with their convictions," following, as it does, his insistence that the clergy must lead rather than merely reflect the mood and concerns of any given moment, is a suggested cure that highlights the problem. It assumes that convictions must necessarily "drive us up a wall." That assumption is both unwarranted and indefensible. Are there no convictions that reflect the mercy and goodness of the God we want to know and the hope of the preacher-pastor that his message will help people "unleash . . . the potential within us to transcend our differences"? Is it possible for a clergy-person to "[call] us to do what is right" without convictions?

Perhaps the problem is that the contemporary clergyperson is expected to be scholar, saint, counselor, fund raiser, and administrator, and to excel in each of these diverse areas at all times and under all circumstances.

It is often difficult to hear "the still, small voice" in the midst of the clamor of a community that makes such demands on those who seek to serve and

lead it at the same time. I suspect that even Moses, Jesus, Amos, and Hosea would have had some difficulty hearing the call amid the clamor.

RABBI MURRAY I. ROTHMAN
*Temple Shalom of Newton
Newton, Mass.*

Ido not doubt the veracity of the accounts and descriptions of some of the schools that Paul Wilkes visited, and no seminary president or dean would deny working hard at recruiting more well-qualified, emotionally healthy students. But focusing almost exclusively on a limited category of institutions, to the exclusion of geographically dispersed church-related Protestant and evangelical schools, does little to bring an honest or valid answer to the question of the impact of religion in American life. Indeed, by providing such a slight review of large and influential schools like Fuller Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and ignoring scores of robust and growing evangelical seminaries, you have succeeded in perpetuating a distortion.

Wilkes's article may simply prove to make more difficult the lot of the thousands of seminarians who are "educationally and spiritually sound, politically aware, as conversant with demography as they are with morality."

ROBERT E. COOLEY
*President
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
South Hamilton, Mass.*

How can Paul Wilkes write about theology for more than twenty pages and barely mention God? That's what religion is about (as Wilkes comes close to mentioning in the last paragraph)—the God who judges man's morality but at the same time is just as serious in his mercy and goodness.

Morality is about what men should do for God. Religion is about what God has done for men. And that's not a question of conservative or liberal, of modern or traditional; that's the difference between Law and Gospel. If seminarians would hold out the Gospel instead of waving more and more banners for the Law, their hands could really make some progress at shaping our souls.

JEFF SCHONE
Winneconne, Wis.



LEGALIZING DRUGS

Richard Dennis's "The Economics of Legalizing Drugs" (November *Atlantic*) relies heavily on a cost-benefit analysis that underestimates the costs. Dennis separates the argument from any "moral" discussion, claiming that Americans have nothing against mind-altering substances; they only dislike the violence resulting from drug trafficking. He is wrong to make this distinction, and even if one accepts his terms, a cost-benefit analysis will not yield a victory for legalization.

But morality ought to be included in any discussion of legalization, especially since an overwhelming majority of Americans are strongly opposed to decriminalizing drugs. If the morality of taking mind-altering substances were not an issue, no one would care if a politician or a Supreme Court nominee had smoked marijuana during the sixties, when it was more or less legal in small doses. But that's not the case. And the connection between government ethics and the morality of legalization is clear. The Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles says that legalization would be a "moral surrender of far-reaching implications about the way we treat each other. . . . [Young people] need the societal order to say we stand for something."

Let us assume, however, that Dennis is right that morality plays no role in the legalization debate. How does he determine that the benefits of legalization outweigh the costs?

When estimating the health-care cost of drugs, for example, he describes the "addiction and death" caused by drug use, implying that soci-

ety must provide care for victims of overdose and dependence. But drug-related health-care costs far exceed this narrow definition. Emergency-room personnel say that only a tiny percentage of drug-related injuries are reported as such. An overdose will go on the patient's record as drug-related, but a gunshot wound will not. Perhaps the greatest cost to society of drug use, emergency-room overcrowding and subsequent closings of emergency departments, is underestimated. The emergency-room crisis harms the

as a reason for quitting. Dennis neglects to remind us that the survey did not include people who had never tried cocaine (maybe because they feared going to jail).

Some people are more susceptible to casual drug use than others, as postulated in the "epidemic" theory of drug abuse. Supporters of this theory—and there are many—say that drug users try to make converts. Someone might tell a phone surveyer that he or she would never try cocaine. But if his best friend urged him to experiment, he

might act differently. This relates to another shortcoming in Dennis's argument. The number of addicts would not stop at some magical plateau but would increase exponentially. We know from experience that drug use is "contagious." Unrestricted access to drugs would inestimably expand drug use.

Dennis argues that alcohol and cigarettes should provide a threshold of acceptability for drug costs. It is spurious, though, to make physiological comparisons between alcohol and illicit drugs. Dr. Gabriel G. Nahas, of Columbia University, says that whereas tobacco (nicotine),

alcohol (in small amounts), and coffee (caffeine) do not impair mental ability, small doses of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana do. Usage patterns also differ between licit and illicit drugs. Only eight percent of alcohol users consume amounts damaging to their health, compared with 50 percent of marijuana users and 90 percent of cocaine users.

CHARLES B. RANGEL
Chairman

House Committee on
Narcotics Abuse and Control
Washington, D.C.

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health care of every citizen in the nation. Dennis's analysis did not include this cost—one that would increase under any legalization scheme.

Dennis concedes that an increase in the number of addicts would follow legalization. His calculations of the scale of increase, however, belittle the outcome. He assumes that people are not afraid of current restrictions and thus would not drastically change their behavior if the laws were changed. He refers to a survey of people who stopped using cocaine and rarely listed the law



I have several questions about "The Economics of Legalizing Drugs": Where is the proof that legalizing 80 percent of illegal drug use would result in saving 80 percent of law-enforcement dollars? Is there really a one-for-one correspondence here? Since Richard Dennis gives us no breakdown of where law-enforcement dollars are spent, his projection of savings is meaningless.

Similarly, how can Dennis claim 80 percent savings in social costs? Is there really any evidence that since crack represents only 10 percent of the total dollar volume of the drug trade, crack users represent only 10 percent of the social costs? We can't expect to see an 80 percent reduction in the value of stolen property associated with drug use just by legalizing the use of marijuana and cocaine.

In legalizing drugs we would not be removing drug restrictions, only changing them. There would still be costs involved in regulating drugs. Even if the federal government did legalize drugs, it's likely that states and counties would impose their own tax rates and other restrictions, just as they have done with liquor and tobacco products. Drug enforcement is big business, and legalization will not change that.

There is also the big issue of responsibility. Given its current procedures, could the Food and Drug Administration really approve cocaine as an over-the-counter drug? Even aspirin would not be approved if it were introduced today. Dennis himself admits, "The well-publicized death of Len Bias and other harrowing stories have carried the message far and wide that drugs are dangerous." Americans who boycotted apples during the pesticide scare are not going to allow dangerous drugs to be sold in state-regulated stores in their neighborhoods. As bartenders are held responsible for their patrons, so will cocaine merchants be. This responsibility will extend all the way back to the federal government as people seek compensation for every death, crime, or accident related to legal cocaine or marijuana use.

AURLIE MCCREA
Redondo Beach, Calif.

Richard Dennis misunderstands the structure of the market for illicit drugs. At the very least one must consider two tiers of distribution—whole-

saler cartels and middleman street dealers. It is unlikely that the return for dealers is particularly high, appropriately adjusted for risk (in fact, a recent Rand study of dealing in Washington, D.C., suggests that the return is not particularly high even ignoring the risk of death and injury). Almost anyone can be a dealer, and this fact, combined with the endogenous level of profit-seeking violence, dissipates the pure profits in that activity. Yet Dennis talks of "profit for inner-city thugs"; there may be accounting profits, but certainly not economic ones. The wholesaler cartels, however, are a different story; here, as Dennis suggests, profits are immense, because these cartels are very cohesive.

It is unlikely, then, that demand would be sufficiently unresponsive to price (inelastic, in the jargon of economics) to lead to an increase in profits when interdiction decreases the street supply of cocaine. Yet this is exactly what Dennis suggests occurred when a raid in southern California last year captured twenty tons of cocaine. When supply to the street lessens because of interdiction, it is not because less was supplied by the cartel, so the alleged increase in cartel profits cannot be because cartel costs have fallen. It can occur only because revenues rise as the demand price rises—this means demand is inelastic. But to an economist, this conclusion is very odd: it refutes any assumption of profit-maximizing behavior by the supplying cartel, since it's an elementary proposition that a monopolist will operate on the elastic portion of its demand curve.

Dennis's second major error lies in his discussion of how demand will be affected by legalization. His universe of potential users of cocaine, following legalization, is 60 million—the 60 million Americans who have tried marijuana in the past. Thirty million Americans have tried cocaine, and Dennis assumes, probably correctly, that they are included in that 60 million. But Dennis then implicitly assumes either that these 30 million not only have tried cocaine but are using it as much now as they would were it legalized, or that having tried it once, they'll never try it again! Accordingly, it is only the remaining 30 million whom he considers as potential new users: "at risk to try legal, inexpensive cocaine." The oversight here is clear.

He then goes on to argue that legalization may lead to an increase in the number of users on the order of 25 percent or so of these 30 million: "the quarter [of potential users] that is price-sensitive." This movement down the demand curve he characterizes as representing the entire increase in demand; he ignores any corresponding increase in use by *current* users as the price plummets. He also ignores any possible outward shift of the demand curve for non-price-related reasons, such as the abolition of penalties on users and of any social stigma that may be associated with lawbreaking. Now, this last point may well have been overstressed by opponents of legalization, as Dennis suggests, but it's hard to believe it would have zero impact on demand. For these reasons, all of his numbers for the increased demand, tax revenue, and so on are completely hopeless.

MARTIN RICHARDSON
Washington, D.C.

"The Economics of Legalizing Drugs" does not address one of the most important aspects of the entire modern drug debate: price. Accompanying the prospect of total availability should be a subsidized price structure that 1) brings down the cost to users, thereby reducing the need to steal from neighbors and society to support the habit, and 2) in a truly democratic gesture, makes the substances available to everyone eligible to consume them. Why should we use legalization to enrich the drug lords of foreign countries? This country can produce under controlled conditions, in any amount, anything demanded on this continent.

It is to be hoped that this scenario would deglamorize the production and distribution arenas and place the responsibility of self-destruction on individual users.

LEWIS M. BORDEN III
Denver, Colo.

Richard Dennis makes sense, but his comparisons with Prohibition are a little off. He's probably too young to remember. I was there. As soon as the do-gooders, with their insatiable desire to regulate other people's lives, foisted Prohibition on the nation, the nation started brewing its own beer and fermenting its own wine. In the grocery



store where I worked, the "good people" in our town bought bottles, caps, cappers, and corks for "catsup." They bought malt for "cookies." I sold these means of law violation to them.

Whereas my home town had only one saloon before Prohibition, with perhaps fifty or seventy-five steady or sometime customers, now several hundred small breweries and wineries sprang up. When the ice man came to our house, he was dead drunk. He had been bribed to keep his mouth shut by unnumbered bottles of home brew that he had discovered in ice compartments. Contrary to Dennis's claim that Prohibition reduced sales of alcoholic beverages, consumption went up dramatically. I don't know where he got his figures. Nobody was keeping score in 1919-1933.

WALT BUESCHER
Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

I was deeply shocked by "The Economics of Legalizing Drugs." As an educator, I cannot accept any point of view that cynically defends legalization and states at the same time that "it

would result in an immediate and permanent 25 percent increase in the number of addicts."

Please cancel my subscription.

BERNARD BEAUZAMY
Professor of Mathematics
University of Paris
Paris, France

Richard Dennis replies:

There is simply no way to know if crack users steal more than other drug users. The *least* hypothetical premise is to assume proportionality of theft per dollar of drug consumption.

If we legalize drugs, FDA restrictions and tort law will certainly have to be bypassed. Drug-law reform or not, these areas are in sore need of restructuring and limitation.

Under legalization a few former users would relapse and some current users would quit. The net effect would likely be a washout.

The inner-city thugs I alluded to in my article are the wholesale dealers who make immense profits—not the street middlemen who are retail dealers and profit much less.

Morality is very important in the drug-policy debate and more clearly favors legalization than does a cost-benefit analysis. It is a moral surrender to jail people for their moral faults when they commit clearly victimless crimes. We ought to stand for individual private responsibility, not collective public scapegoating.

DIRTY CHICKEN

Gene Bruce's "Dirty Chicken" (November *Atlantic*) quoted me several times, but the quotes are incorporated into an emotionally charged, internally inconsistent, and totally unscientific description of the salmonella problem. The article reflects a common but contradictory demand that food be natural and at the same time totally unlike nature. Salmonella bacteria are "abundant in nature," the article says, so why is Bruce surprised to learn that some are found on raw food items? If free-range and organic chickens are as likely to be contaminated as are commercial chickens in the super-



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market, as the article says, then why attack the poultry industry? Experts agree that salmonella can be found on certain raw foods, and more and more people are becoming aware of this. Therefore, isn't careless consumer cooking and handling of these foods at least as much responsible for food-borne illness as the food itself?

Though I have been working for more than twenty years with poultry and salmonella, I eat poultry and have always served it to my family. I do not know a single microbiologist familiar with the poultry industry who has quit eating chicken because of fears about food safety. I have never seen or heard of processing-plant conditions even remotely resembling those described in the article. And contrary to the picture of an uncaring industry, I find that the poultry industry is very concerned about salmonella and is actively looking for ways to reduce the incidence of it. In fact, the poultry industry has appropriated millions of dollars to support research directed toward solving the salmonella problem. And last, but certainly not least, I would like the readers (consumers) to know this: with proper handling and cooking, poultry meat is a safe, nutritious, wholesome food.

NELSON A. COX
Research Microbiologist
United States Department of Agriculture
Athens, Ga.

As a professor responsible for teaching courses and conducting research in the production, processing, and handling of poultry food products, I feel compelled to respond to your article "Dirty Chicken."

Do problems exist in food sanitation? Is there a potential for food-borne disease? Are there errors that occur during processing? Are there variations in the application of inspection criteria? Can food be hazardous to your health? The answer to all these questions is yes. It is also true that these concerns are being addressed by industry, academia, and government, and that all generally agree that our food supply is one of the safest in the world. The real questions have to do with what can be done, what should be done, and what we can afford to do, considering that the actual problem is quite small.

We live in a complex world with

complex problems. Simple solutions to complex problems do not normally exist. It is easy to find fault but extremely difficult to find answers. The Bruce article finds fault but makes little effort to balance this with practical solutions or alternatives.

The United States has close to 250 million people who consume, on average, four ounces of poultry meat every day! To imply that poultry constitutes more of a risk than other foods is totally absurd, given the actual occurrence of disease outbreaks. We have one of the lowest rates of food-borne illness of any country in the world. Our food supply is of unparalleled safety and quality. To imply otherwise only undermines one of our nation's greatest accomplishments.

DANIEL L. FLETCHER
Professor of Poultry Science
College of Agriculture
The University of Georgia
Athens, Ga.

Gene Bruce replies:

Nelson Cox says that consumers should accept more responsibility for preventing illness. I find this position, the standard one in government and industry, odd, since both government and industry have failed to warn consumers adequately about the hazards of poultry.

Mr. Cox says he has never seen or heard of processing-plant conditions like those described in the article. In contrast, scores of USDA inspectors, who have worked in processing plants across the country, swear they have seen these conditions.

Finally, Mr. Cox asks why I attacked the poultry industry. I did not attack the poultry industry. In attempting to learn about the problem of food-borne illness, I conducted interviews with more than a hundred people; their testimony sometimes reflected badly on the industry.

Daniel Fletcher says the salmonella problem is "quite small." However, scientists at the Centers for Disease Control, who have tracked the recent rise in salmonella illness, disagree.

IBM VAN WINKLE

James Fallows's re-examination of the personal-computer industry after a four-year hiatus ("IBM Van Winkle,"

November *Atlantic*) was insightful, informative, and to the point regarding recent developments in the personal-computer market. I was, however, somewhat alarmed by his quick dismissal of the Macintosh as a computer worthy of consideration as a serious machine. Fallows may not be aware of the substantial advances in Macintosh technology that Apple has made since 1986.

A recent study conducted by Ingram Laboratories, an independent PC-testing company, pitted the entire Macintosh desktop product line against PCs from IBM and Compaq, running Windows 3.0. In the study seven software applications, including word-processing programs, were timed doing a variety of everyday tasks. In the overall results Macintosh computers exceeded in performance benchmarks those of equivalent computers from IBM and Compaq. In fact, the Macintosh IIx came in ahead of every other Macintosh tested.

Additionally, Ingram Laboratories calculated price-performance ratios and concluded that because of Apple's superior performance and lower prices, Macintosh computers far outranked their competitors in the IBM and Compaq lines. When the price-performance of PC clones was calculated, the Macintosh products still came out ahead.

ED BIRSS
Senior Vice President
Apple Computer, Inc.
Cupertino, Calif.

James Fallows replies:

I owe the Macintosh family, and Mr. Birss on its behalf, an apology. I have a bias: I hate using "mouse-and-icon" computer systems, of which the Macintosh, and before it the Xerox Star, were the pioneers. I can type very quickly, and I'd rather keep my fingers on the keyboard. I am also the victim of habit. Since the dawn of the personal-computer age I have sunk so much money into IBM-style equipment, and—more important—spent so much time developing the reflexes for IBM/MS-DOS-style programs, that it would be insane for me to change to something else now.

These are the reasons I wrote only about IBM-style computers in my article. My mistake was in not explaining my biases clearly, and instead offhand-



edly remarking that the Macintosh was "slow." The new models are plenty fast, as Mr. Birss points out.

MORE SCHOOL DAYS

While Michael J. Barrett is probably correct in his claim that increasing the number of school days will improve students' education ("The Case for More School Days," November *Atlantic*), he makes the common mistake of assuming that a hard correlation exists between high school students' performance on standardized tests and a nation's potential for excellence in science and engineering. The most important training that budding researchers receive is not in the high school but beyond. Despite the abysmal condition of elementary and secondary education in this country, our universities are still the best in the world, a fact attested to not only in U.S. universities but also by the high percentage of Nobel laureates that the United States continues to produce.

Unfortunately, Barrett's narrow fo-

cus on science and math neglects the real problem. The purpose of the high schools is not to prepare scientists but to prepare reasonably educated, literate members of a democratic society; *that* is what they are failing to do, and *that* is what should have been addressed in the article.

KERIM YASAR
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Michael J. Barrett replies:

Kerim Yasar believes that American high school graduates catch up to their international peers as long as they go on to college and graduate school. For some purposes and in some disciplines this is likely to be true, but the scattered evidence on the issue is not particularly reassuring.

Certainly it is beside the point to note that "our universities are still the best in the world." In a December 26, 1990, editorial, *The New York Times* asked, "Who are America's future scientists and mathematicians? Increasingly, they're foreign citizens" who enroll in American universities. Many remain here and contribute to the U.S.

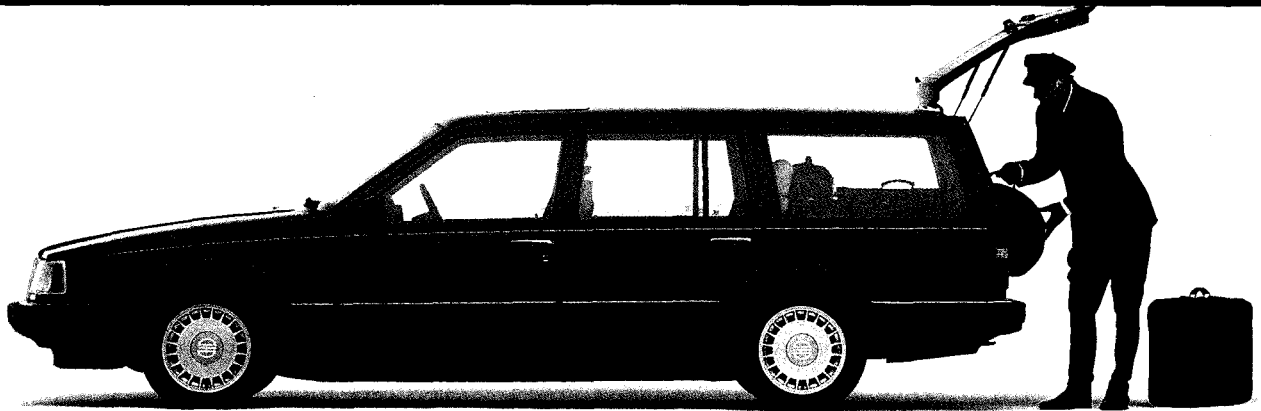
economy; many do not. Meanwhile, American high school graduates take advantage of these opportunities in higher education in alarmingly decreasing numbers.

How to bring the numbers back up? The first advice from the *Times* was start early, in elementary school—which undercuts Mr. Yasar's suggestion that we can catch up later. "When students get to college," the *Times* said, "even those with an aptitude for math, science or engineering are dismayed to find that their training suffers next to that of foreign students. Most choose other subjects."

CORRECTIONS

The Contributors note for Robert Morgan in our December issue gave the wrong title for Mr. Morgan's most recent book of poems. The correct title is *Sigodlin*.

The February Puzzler, "Heartbroken," suffered the effects of a computer glitch: numbers 23 and 24 in its grid were each shifted one square to the left. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused solvers.



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Fair Dinku



***fair dinkum**/—*Colloq.*—*adj.* 1: true, genuine, dinkum
or genuineness <it's true, mate, fair dinkum> 3: Com



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are you fair dinkum?>—*interj.* 2: assertion of truth
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GOVERNMENT

March 5–17, Supreme Court recesses. 31, Pease Air Force Base, in New Hampshire, will shut its gates. Pease is the first of 86 domestic military installations to close by September 30, 1995, as mandated by Congress in 1988. A second list of bases to be closed is in the works; it is being prepared according to stringent rules and deadlines laid out in the most recent defense-authorization bill. By the middle of this month Congress must approve or disapprove closure criteria prepared by the Secretary of Defense. By the middle of next month the Department of Defense must submit a list of additional bases to the Base Closing Commission, a blue-ribbon panel whose eight members were chosen by President Bush in consultation with congressional leaders. The commission will review the recommendations and make any changes it deems necessary. The list will then (by July 15) be submitted to the President, who can either approve it, without alterations, or disapprove it. If the President approves it, the list will go before Congress, which cannot alter it either. Congress must approve or disapprove the package by year's end.

ENVIRONMENT

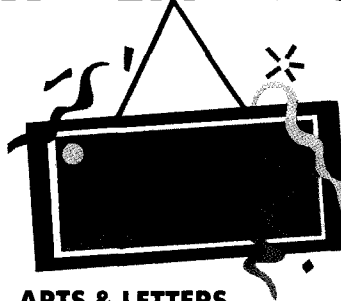
"The north wind, the east wind, and west wind together, / Inbringing, inbringing the March's wild weather"—Constance Fenimore Woolson. March 7–10, the ninth annual Public-Interest Environmental

Law Conference, at the University of Oregon, in Eugene. Tailored to the overworked, underpaid one percent of all environmental lawyers who do not work for corporations or government, this event has seen attendance grow from 75 in its first year to more than 1,100 last year. Official panel topics range from the professional ("Cross-examination of Expert Witnesses") through the technical ("Dioxin and Pulp Plants") to the philosophical ("Racism and Environmental Justice") and the esoteric ("Deep Ecology").



Q & A

When Milli Vanilli offered thanks in thick German accents for their 1989 Grammy Award, why weren't TV viewers tipped off to the fact that they were not the actual singers of the American-sounding songs on their best-selling album? One reason could be that people who listen to popular music have grown accustomed to hearing great discrepancies in artists' spoken and sung accents (think of the Beatles, ABBA, or Cyndi Lauper); the general rule is that heavy accents get squelched by the act of singing. There is a basic physiological reason for this. The space above the voice box, the supraglottal cavity, tends to assume a different shape during singing. The supraglottal configuration is responsible for the way we pronounce vowels, and vowel sounds are very important in the production of an accent. During singing the supraglottal configuration is highly consistent among singers of any particular type of music (whether it is pop, blues, or opera). In regular speech, however, the configuration of their supraglottal cavities may vary widely.



ARTS & LETTERS

March 15–17, 150 crossword-puzzle enthusiasts will gather in Stamford, Connecticut, to compete in the 14th annual American Crossword Puzzle Tournament. Among the clues distinguishing last year's final round of play: "It's most useful when it's cracked" (four letters); "Flat piece of paper" (five letters). 17, the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C., celebrates its 50th anniversary. In 1930 and 1931 Andrew Mellon, the Secretary of the Treasury, secretly bought for his personal collection 21 Old Masters from the Hermitage museum, in Leningrad, providing the Soviet government with desperately needed hard currency; in 1941 Mellon gave these paintings, along with 111 others and \$15 million, to the U.S. government to create the National Gallery. This gift is the largest ever made by an individual to a government. (The answers to the crossword-puzzle clues above: "whip," "lease.")

FOOD

Lent extends throughout the month; the nation's 55 million or so Roman Catholics are prohibited during this period from eating meat on Fridays. According to the National Fisheries Institute, in Arlington, Virginia, more seafood is sold during Lent than at any other time of the year. As one might expect, sales of fish at restaurants are also high. A spokesperson for Red Lobster, the country's largest dinner-house chain, says that business always

picks up markedly right after Ash Wednesday. The McDonald's Filet-O-Fish sandwich owes its existence to Lent. In 1963 Lou Groen, an owner-operator of a McDonald's franchise in Cincinnati, introduced a fish sandwich at his restaurant to hold on to the customers he typically lost during Lent. Over a period of two years Groen saw the volume of his business increase by 30 percent, and the McDonald's chain as a whole adopted the fish sandwich.

THE SKIES

March 16, New Moon. 20, at 9:02 P.M. EST, the Vernal Equinox; spring begins. The Vernal Equinox is one of two places in the sky (the other is the Autumnal Equinox) where Earth's celestial equator crosses its ecliptic. 30, Full Moon.



100 YEARS AGO

George E. Howard, writing in the March, 1891, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Higher education has long been growing more rational. Yet there is a widespread feeling of discontent with the present ideal of academic culture which sometimes degenerates into downright pessimism. It must be conceded that education costs too much time and too much money. . . . The college curriculum should be still further transformed in order to bring it into harmony with the requirements of modern life. Our average standard of attainment is very low, and the reason is plain—we have wasted our resources. But happily we are ceasing to be proud of the fact that we have 'four hundred colleges and universities.' . . . [The] conviction is deepening that the founding of a college is not necessarily a blessing to the community."

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Healing the Ghettos

*A vision of the possible
in race relations*

—◆—

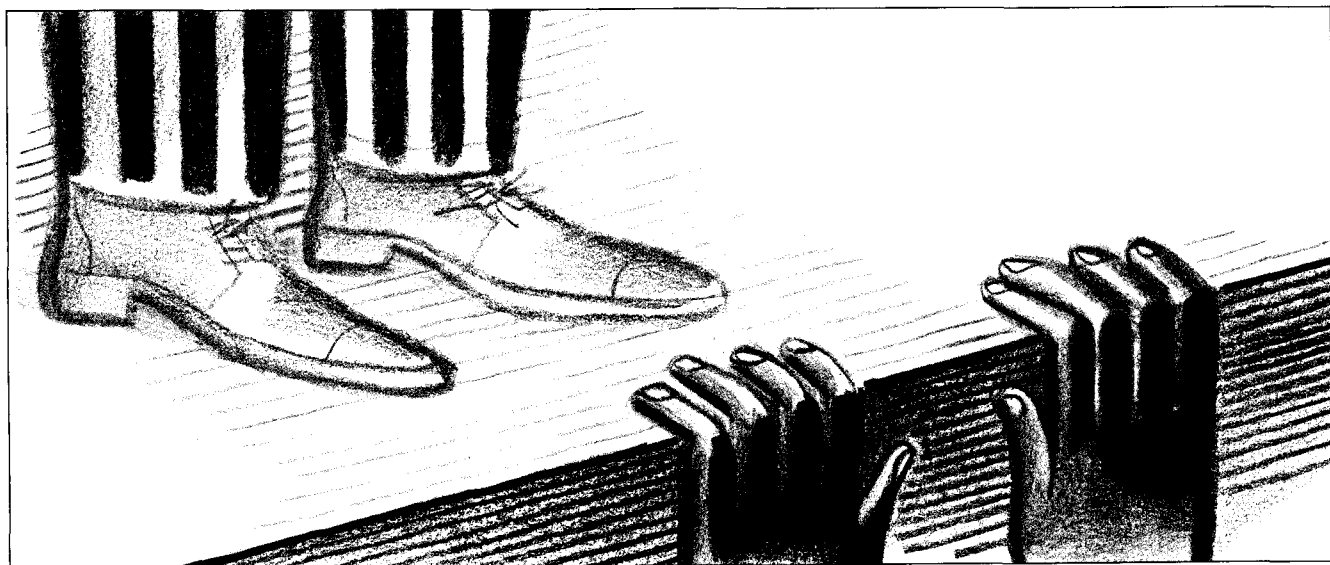
THINKING ABOUT the history of American race relations can easily give rise to bitterness and fatalism, but it is encouraging to remember how often in the past situations that appeared to be impervious to change finally did change, and for the better. The framers of the Constitution, idealists though they were, couldn't imagine an end to slavery, but in the long run slavery was ended. In this century legal segregation looked impossible to eliminate until well after the end of the Second World War. That black Amer-

ica could become substantially middle-class, non-southern, and non-agrarian would have seemed inconceivable until a bare two generations ago.

Today the racial problem that is regarded as insuperable is the condition of the black slums in big cities. At the level of conversation, if not of political oratory, there seems to be a conviction that we don't know what could possibly help the ghettos; that even if we did know, it couldn't be done, for lack of political support; and that some unbridgeable gap between blacks and whites makes the amelioration of any problem related to race unlikely. These sentiments are neither clear-eyed nor realistic. They belong on the long list of dolorous racial attitudes that turn out to be resistance to change wearing the garb of pessimism.

American society in the wider sense is not a presence in the ghettos except on television. Policemen don't walk the beat, most schools don't teach, fathers don't live at home, crime goes unpunished, the ward and precinct

bosses who once offered a link to the political system are disappearing, and the old-fashioned settlement-house and social-agency training functions have withered away. Outside the ghettos, especially in the black middle class, sentiment has begun to run strongly in favor of re-establishing the social linkages between poor blacks and the rest of black society, but right now there is no mechanism to bring that about. It is tempting to believe that the ghettos would pull themselves up by their bootstraps if only we could remove from the scene "irresponsible black leaders" who blame everything on white people, but the truth is that given how poor and dispirited slums are, it is unlikely that their residents would suddenly mobilize around some new figure who preached moderation and bourgeois values. Any planned undertaking will have to be of enormous scope if it is to affect the ghettos significantly. For both practical and moral reasons, the institution by far best suited to the task is the federal government.





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THE PROSPECT OF federal involvement in community affairs tends to elicit two fears. The traditional white southern one is that Washington will impose its will (usually liberal, and usually race-conscious) on the finely wrought social organization of faraway communities; the second, the newer, black one, is that whites will try to colonize and subjugate black communities.

Neither of these prospects need be severely worrisome. Most of the government offices already in ghetto neighborhoods operate under local auspices and would continue to. A revival of the War on Poverty's "maximum feasible participation" clause, which was enacted in 1964 as a way to bypass local government in search of "authentic leaders" to receive federal funds, is the remotest of all political possibilities, especially since so many local officials now are black. The federal function would be to provide more money and to direct what should be done with it. Past experience tells us that although this wouldn't be wildly popular, it would not amount to Washington's forcibly taking over local institutions. As for the issue of white imperialism, the threat would not seem nearly so serious now as it did in the time of the War on Poverty, because today most of the government employees who work in the ghettos (like the politicians who represent the ghettos) are black, and the social-welfare bureaucrats staffing any new social programs in the ghettos would also be mostly black. The programs would help to bring the two parts of black America together, and would incidentally strengthen the economic base of the black middle class, which is government employment.

Another block to new federal programs is the now pervasive skepticism about the ability of the federal government to take on any task without botching it. The shortcomings of the government's response in the first place to the problems of the ghettos are largely to blame for the wider loss of faith in government domestic policy. With respect to the ghettos, however, the idea that the government can't accomplish anything is a smokescreen obscuring the useful and encouraging results of a quarter century's worth of research on anti-poverty programs—research of a kind that didn't exist when the War on Poverty began. We

now know that the easiest problem to solve is simple material need: the food-stamp program plainly reduces hunger, for example. In the ghettos material need is only part of the problem, and the successes are less dramatic. Still, many programs that come under the banner of "intervention," in which the government becomes a guiding presence in the lives of the ghetto poor, do demonstrably work.

Programs offering education, counseling, and birth-control devices in high-school-based clinics can reduce teenage-pregnancy rates. Programs that send nurses and social workers to the homes of expectant mothers to provide prenatal care or food reduce infant-mortality rates. Head Start produces higher graduation and employment rates and lower rates of arrest and teenage pregnancy among its former participants. James Comer, of the Yale University Child Study Center, has impressively raised the achievement scores of ghetto elementary school students through a system of unusually intense involvement by the school in the lives of students and their parents. Various job-training programs, including the Job Corps, increase their former participants' long-term likelihood of being employed.

All these programs are relatively expensive per participant, and their payoff is not immediate and tangible, but in the long run they save the government money that would have gone to welfare and incarceration. Planning them and carrying them out creates a setting where many thousands of blacks and whites can work together to bring something new and worthy into being; this is a public dialogue about race far better than one consisting mainly of squabbling over the distribution of resources and arguing about whose fault it is that things are so bad.

IT IS NOT at all difficult to sketch out the framework of such a wholesale government effort—an effort so comprehensive that it would substantially affect everyone who lives in the ghettos. The rather casual official attitude toward street crime, for example, which has existed for as long as there have been ghettos, could finally change; policemen could be put back on the streets, and criminals quickly punished. Welfare could become a

temporary program leading to a job. Housing projects could begin screening tenants again and kicking out bad ones. We could try to ensure that every ghetto child is born healthy, learns to read and write in grade school, graduates from high school, gets trained for the job market as it now exists, has a private or government-created job waiting at the end of the process, and puts off parenthood until he or she can manage a family. Obviously the precise structuring and the management of all the programs would require painstaking, detailed work, but the overall concept is simple and direct: the government should be trying to break the hold of those aspects of the ghetto culture that work against upward mobility, by constantly and powerfully encouraging ghetto residents to consider themselves part of the social structure of the country as a whole.

In the current political climate this may all sound nearly fantastic, but it is fully in accord with the thinking of most of the leading experts in the field. (Only the government's guaranteeing everyone a job is not now a matter of consensus.) Besides not being a daring conceptual leap into the unknown, as it was in the mid-1960s, a major expansion of the government's social programs (again excepting guaranteed jobs) would not be that expensive. Most estimates put the cost in the range of \$10 billion to \$25 billion a year, which even at the high end is only about a thirtieth of the federal budget. Whether that is exorbitant depends on what it accomplishes and how the effort is understood. If it makes a significant improvement in what we all know is the principal problem in American domestic life—a problem that poisons not just race relations but also our attitudes toward education, law enforcement, and city life itself—it will be a bargain.

Racial progress has almost never been a populist or popular cause, except of course among African-Americans. The alliance that in the past has produced reform is between black leaders and white liberals, and they have been able, in the best cases at least, to bring a recalcitrant public around to their views. That the next important step in American race relations now appears politically dangerous is entirely typical, and it need not prevent progress from being made. The

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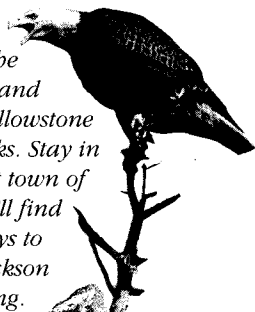
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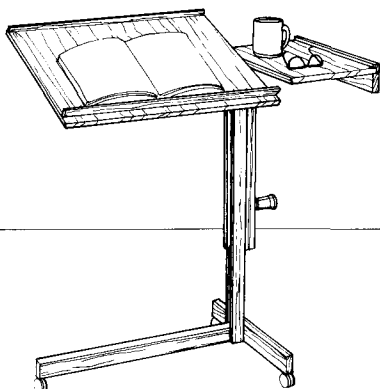
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real impediment in the short run is not a lack of political support, which in racial matters always comes after the fact if it comes at all, but a weakness of spirit.

FOR MOST OF our history the issue of race has been linked to the issue of nationhood. During periods of fragmentation—periods when a multiplicity of local, ethnic, and economic interests have held sway—racial problems have been put on the shelf. It is when there has been a strong sense of national community that the problems have been addressed. The Civil War was one such time, at least in the Union states, and the long stretch between the New Deal and the Vietnam War was another; these periods brought us emancipation and civil rights. It has always been the federal government, not local governments or private businesses, that has led the way on race relations (though often the government has had to be prodded into action by a political movement); the personal involvement of the President himself has usually been necessary. Like national defense and foreign policy, the management of racial issues seems to require a capability for national action. If the idea that the federal government could now improve race relations seems strange, this is only a symptom of a much broader problem: we are insufficiently unified as a society to be able successfully to undertake ambitious, organized national projects of any kind. If we can heal the ghettos, which are the part of the country most hurt by our current fragmentation, it will be a sign that we are on the way to a restoration of our communitarian spirit.

It is essential that any attempt to address racial issues win public support quickly, even though it doesn't have public support to begin with. Otherwise it will suffer the fate of Reconstruction and the War on Poverty—a short life followed by a period of reaction. The most straightforward way to win acceptance for new federal programs would be to show that they work, not in the sense of eliminating the underclass overnight but in the sense of being honest, well run, committed to mainstream values, and devoid of the punitive, ram-it-down-their-throats quality that the shortest-lived reforms have had. The forces of

practicality could be brought around to support government programs if it became clear that a better work force and calmer cities would be the result. State and local governments would feel a pull to create social programs of their own once they saw that ghetto conditions were susceptible to improvement. But among the reasons why the federal government would need to be central to the first wave of new programs is that it can maintain quality and ensure consistency of purpose. A radically decentralized approach, like the old community-action program, would be bound to produce at least some disasters.

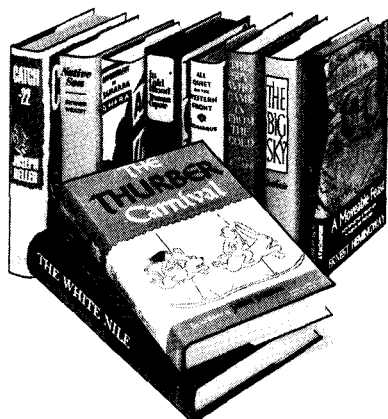
Since the failure of the War on Poverty, the call to action to help the ghettos has always been couched as something else: as a new family policy, or children's policy, or drug policy, or civil-rights policy. Those aspects of ghetto life that can be characterized as self-destructive behavior rather than as victimization of the innocent—drug use, out-of-wedlock childbearing, dropping out of school—are quite often played down for fear that Americans will leap to the conclusion that the black ghetto poor are undeserving and should be written off.

The result of all this well-intentioned fuzzing of the true nature of the tragedy in the ghettos is the loss of moral urgency, and all causes need moral urgency if they are to be fulfilled. Race relations is the one area in American domestic life about which the whole country agrees that something is terribly wrong, and in which the vocabulary of crisis and national responsibility is not overstatement. The United States has an undeniable strain of racial prejudice in its character, but it also has a racial conscience that periodically comes to the fore. What brings it out is the demonstration that intolerable conditions in black America are clearly linked to the country's history of departing from its democratic ideals when it comes to blacks.

The ghettos bear the accumulated weight of all the bad in our country's racial history, and they are now among the worst places in the world to live. To be born into a ghetto is to be consigned to a fate that no American should have to suffer. The more clearly we can be made to see that, and to understand the causes of the situation, the less likely it is that we will let matters stand.

—Nicholas Lemann

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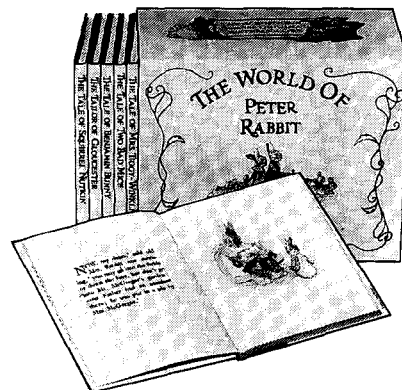


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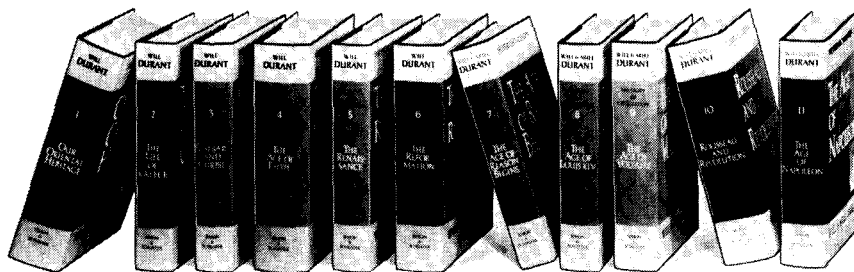
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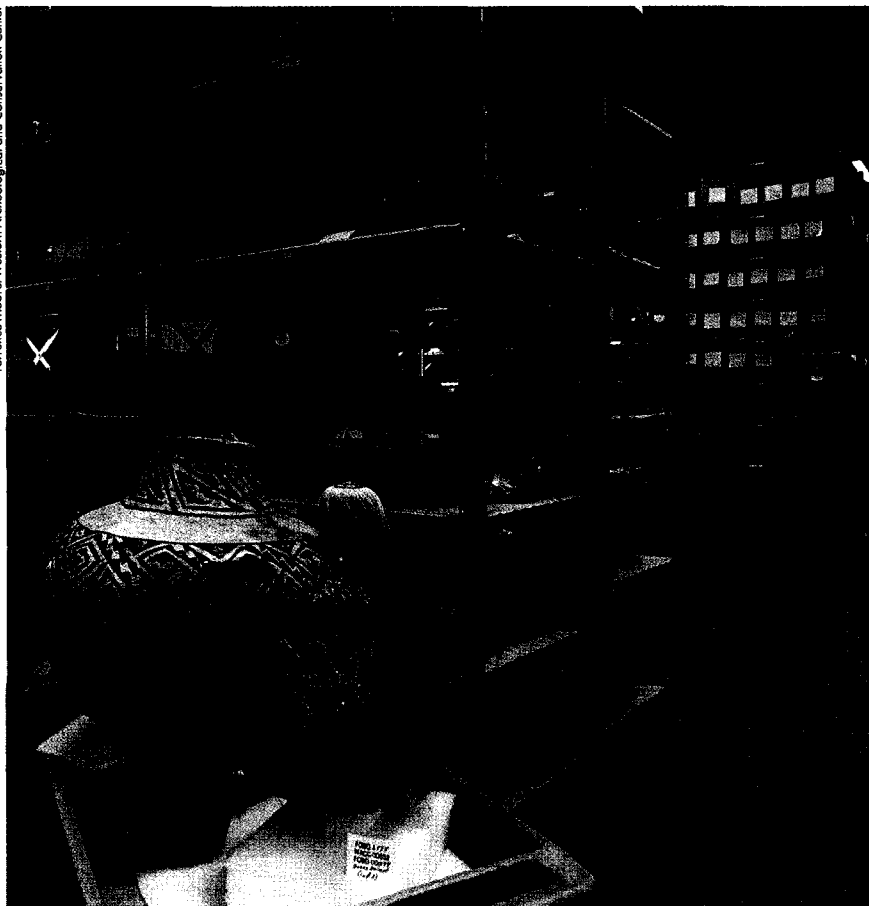
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Artifacts stored at the National Park Service's repository in Tucson

ARCHAEOLOGY

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ON A SERE summer day not long ago David Stephen pulled his Land Cruiser onto a shimmering scarp in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains, above Tucson, Arizona, and came to a halt at the edge of a steep arroyo. He pulled a revolver from the glove compartment and motioned for me to get out. I looked at him in surprise.

"Grave robbers?" I asked.

"Rattlesnakes," he said.

He slung his holster over his shoulder and headed away, and I followed him into the desert, threading among the saguaro and prickly pear, for what turned out to be a trip backward about a thousand years.

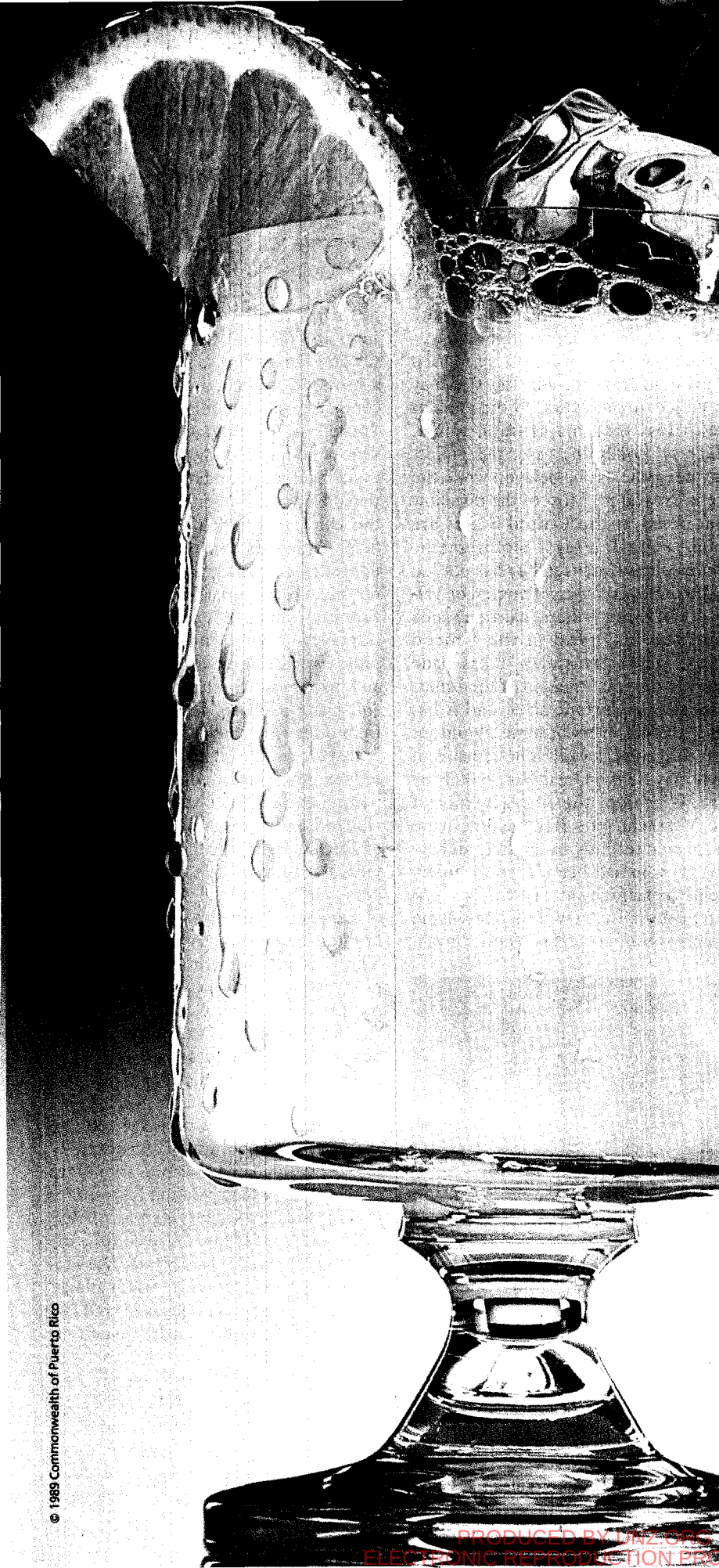
A covey of quail skittered by. We happened upon a pack rat's nest and then another, and when we came to a third, Stephen, who is an archaeologist at Pima Community College, kicked it and dislodged from under the brush a spray of pottery shards. We walked on. "There's some more pottery," Stephen said, pointing to a place near my feet, but I saw nothing until he had picked up a piece and licked it to reveal its rich terra-cotta hue. "There's some more," he said a moment later. Again I saw nothing. Gradually, though, my eyes grew accustomed to the landscape, as if to objects in a darkened room, and I came to realize that with every step I touched the shattered remnants of lives lived fifty generations ago. At one place there was a slight depression. "Pot hunters," Stephen said. "Kid stuff, though. If they'd been serious, they would have been up here with backhoes." We moved farther along the ridge. Finally Stephen stopped on a level patch of ground and told me that we were standing on top of a house.

With a sweep of his arm he defined a

perimeter and said, "If you look around, you'll see that in a kind of circle here the soil is a little sandier than it was where we just were, and the color's a little different, and there are none of the bigger rocks you find just beyond. The vegetation is sparser and a little stunted. I'm ninety-nine percent certain there's a house under here." As we moved on, Stephen pointed out more "houses"—a whole village of them, in fact, one that probably flourished around A.D. 1000. Before long Stephen showed me several sites that he had believed contained houses and had excavated, digging down to reveal their hard-packed soil floors, along with a lot of ancient plant remains and tool flakes and other domestic garbage.

"There was once quite a populous community up here," he said. "It's not surprising, really. In an environment like this one first of all you want water, and there's the arroyo right over there. You want arable land, which is just below, on the plain, and access to game, which is just above, in the mountains. There were sheep bones in one of the houses we excavated and there are still bighorn up in the Catalinas. Another thing you would want is some protection, which the height up here gives you, and in a place like this you would also want a breeze." The breeze that enveloped us as we talked was hot, but it was steady and it drew off perspiration. Stephen said, "When you look at the kinds of places that people have chosen to live in, you find that century after century they always choose the same ones."

That they do is the reason why David Stephen had been excavating here at all. Stephen, who is primarily a teacher and an academic archaeologist, also works as what is known as a contract archaeologist. As required by various federal, state, and municipal laws—or, in some cases, as required by the dictates of a property owner's conscience—contract archaeologists examine sites that may be archaeologically rich and are about to be developed by builders of homes, roads, office buildings, or factories. Here in the shadow of Pusch Ridge, below Bighorn Point, homes were about to rise again, after a thousand years. Stephen had been asked by Estes Homebuilding, the developers of a project called La Reserve, to come in, survey more than



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a thousand acres for their archaeological significance, probe what seemed to be the important sites, record all the others, retrieve what he could, and then, as soon as possible, get out.

Stephen was happy to oblige. Pima Community College supports one of the largest field-archaeology training programs in the United States, and the work-for-hire provided by companies like Estes Homebuilding, which was voluntarily submitting this tract for review, offers opportunities for public education at private expense. There is money these days in archaeology, and though profit margins are small, the discipline is now as much a business as it is a scholarly pursuit.

UNTIL A HUNDRED years or so ago archaeology was primarily a privately funded and dilettantish affair. Although archaeology has never quite shed its rakish reputation—archaeologists do tend toward drink, they do countenance a bending of rules, they do take a “long view” of the human continuum which makes their personal foibles, when mentioned, seem impossibly trite—some semblance of order and scientific rigor was eventually imposed on the enterprise. For most of this century archaeology everywhere was conducted primarily by people with academic or museum affiliations. They set their own research priorities and were funded through academic or museum channels or by foundations or by an institution like the National Geographic Society. Outside this mainstream were some modest federal salvage programs to provide “mitigation”—often excavation and artifact removal—at archaeological sites threatened by the construction of highways and reservoirs.

Then came the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and with it a web of new federal and state legislation. At its center was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (and its emendations), which stipulated that state historic-preservation officers had to be consulted before construction projects with any sort of federal involvement—that is, occurring on federal lands or funded even in part by the federal government—got under way. This legislation has since been fortified by additional laws and executive orders, and by dozens of federal regulations and directives.

The effect over time has been to make the federal government the biggest supporter of archaeological research in the country. Because many states and municipalities soon spun similar webs of legislation, private developers, even ones that have no federal connection, now must frequently pay for and file archaeological-impact statements before they can legally build. If a survey reveals that a site holds remains of major importance, a building plan may need to be revised or even abandoned, and the site may be subject to protection. If the remains are of less than major importance, which is usually the case, the project may nevertheless be delayed while the site is excavated. Most of the digs now conducted in the United States are done to fulfill a legal requirement. While contract archaeology has not led to the discovery of any Pompeii or Valley of the Kings—there just aren’t such things to be found in the United States, so far as we know—it has made possible the investigation of thousands of smaller prehistoric sites, and it has led to the discovery of some significant historical sites as well. The remains of what may be the Great House built by John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, were discovered recently by contract archaeologists who had been hired to survey the path of a highway that will pass under Boston. In New York City some years ago contract archaeologists inves-

tigating a building site in lower Manhattan uncovered the foundations of the Stadt Huys—New York’s first city hall, built by the Dutch.

No one knows what the annual financial boon to archaeology has been as a consequence of all the federal, state, and local ordinances relating to archaeological impact and historic preservation. One estimate that I heard for federal outlays alone—this from an official at the Department of the Interior—was “somewhat less than a hundred million dollars” a year, as compared with a federal subvention for “pure” archaeological research last year of about \$5 million, from the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the chief government funders in this field. Although the annual outlay for nonfederal contract archaeology cannot be determined, it is without question enormous. All this money supports the work of about 6,000 professionals. Some of them are itinerants who move from project to project and place to place, though never out from under the shadow of bulldozers.

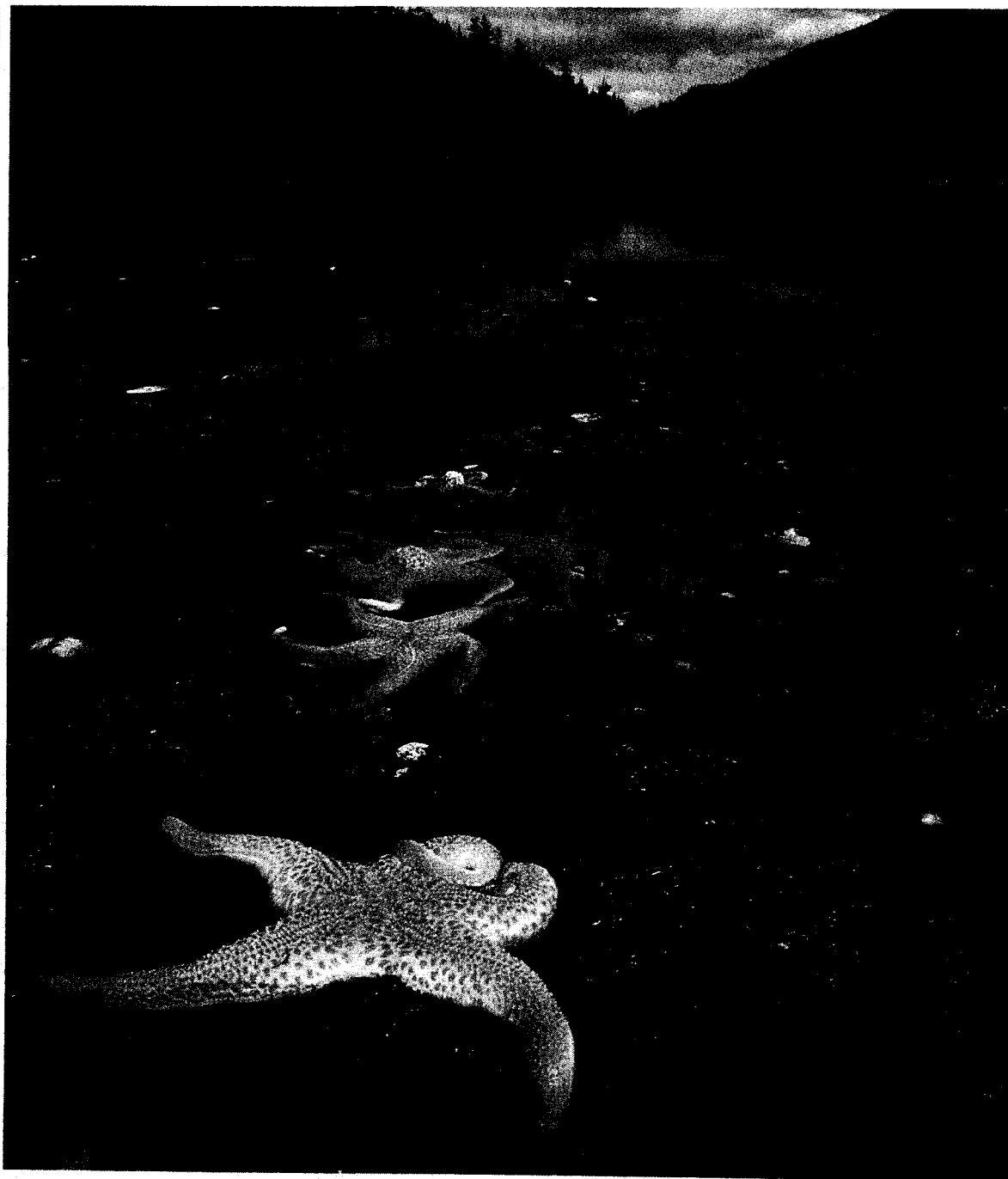
Just to handle its own business the federal government employs some 400 permanent archaeologists in the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several other land-holding or land-modifying agencies. The U.S. government cannot install a new restroom in a national park without calling in an archaeologist. When the Army wants to run tanks over a new piece of ground as part of a war-game exercise, an archaeological survey of the area must be done first. Whatever the future of the Strategic Defense Initiative, it will at least have modestly enhanced our understanding of the past. Artifacts dating back more than 8,000 years were turned up by contract archaeologists a couple of years ago at the White Sands Missile Range, in New Mexico, when plans were being made to build a research facility for a ground-based free-electron laser.

Outside the federal government, every state today has a historic-preservation office, and many states and municipalities have archaeologists on their payrolls. Local museums and universities will sometimes have a contract-ar-



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chaeology arm. In addition to public or nonprofit groups, hundreds of private and for-profit archaeological companies, with names like Environmental Preservation, Inc., and Soil Analysis Associates, have sprung up, many of them active in more than one state. In some parts of the country they are listed in the Yellow Pages. A spot check of state archaeological offices yielded the following estimates of the number of contract-archaeology companies in operation in various places: about a dozen each in Massachusetts and Virginia, twenty in Florida, forty in New Mexico, fifty in California, seventy in New York.

The people involved in this new archaeological enterprise, whatever their professional affiliations, are engaged in what is known in the trade as "cultural-resource management," or CRM. Cultural-resource management has many proponents, because the theory behind it is hard to dispute and because the practice of it involves so much money. But it also has many detractors. Part of the criticism surely stems from sour grapes: some academic archaeologists are envious of their more affluent colleagues. The split between client-oriented or profit-minded archaeology and the more traditional sort may be ill defined—many archaeologists have a foot in both camps—but it can be bitter. Yet, sniping aside, CRM is also beset by some real problems.

I SPENT MOST of a morning in Tucson with Bill Doelle, who is the president of Desert Archaeology, a Tucson-based contract-archaeology company, and who was mentioned by about a dozen people as exemplifying all that can be worthwhile about contract archaeology. Doelle is slim and tall and, like almost every other archaeologist I met in Tucson, has a spouse who is also an archaeologist. Also like almost every other archaeologist I met, he pins cartoons from *The Far Side* on his bulletin board. Desert Archaeology employs a full-time staff of twelve, putting as many as twenty more on the payroll during the peak digging months. The full-time staff members are all trained professionals; Doelle himself holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Arizona. His headquarters, in what looked to have once been a motel, included a modern laboratory and several



Salvage efforts under way at a new highway site in Boston

large storage rooms, where artifacts were arrayed typologically on long tables. Doelle produces an interpretive study for every survey and excavation that his company undertakes. He makes about a hundred copies of each report, binds them durably, and sends them out to major libraries and research institutes in the Southwest. Such studies—called "gray literature" by some in the business—are considered, as one archaeologist I know says, "a step or two up from *samizdat*," but any scholar who shares Doelle's interests will know where to find his publications and others like them.

The Tucson Basin, which has been continuously occupied for thousands of years, is a contract archaeologist's dream. It contains an enormous amount of federal property, and Pima County laws mandate archaeological surveys before certain private properties can be developed. And during much of the past decade Tucson has been among the fastest-growing cities in the country. There is virtually no place along the city's three main riverbeds, which for most of the year are dry, that does not contain evidence of human settlement. Even far beyond the city someone who has a trained eye can hardly walk a hundred yards without picking up signs of a human presence in the distant past. Trying to understand how a large patch of geography strewn with many small sites was actually used in a social and

an economic way, and how it functioned as an ecosystem, is one of the chief aims of the so-called new archaeology—an orientation adopted by many American archaeologists in the 1960s, in part because it makes a great deal of sense and in part out of sheer necessity. (America north of the Rio Grande offers very few spectacular individual sites to explore, and rarely anything comparable to the complex and highly urbanized ancient sites available in Europe or Asia.) In Doelle's view, contract archaeology, which by its very nature results in the amassing of data from many scattered parcels of land, can go a long way toward achieving the objectives of the new archaeology.

Doelle's company has been awarded contracts on significant pieces of the Tucson Basin for study. When I spoke with him, he was engaged in a survey of a 5,000-acre tract on the north side of Tucson where a housing development was about to be built; a 20,000-acre tract slated for irrigation on the Tohono O'odham reservation, which abuts the town on its south and west sides; a site to the north of Tucson in Catalina State Park, where there are known to be at least three dozen unexcavated Indian settlements; and, to the west of downtown Tucson, the site of the Indian village where Spanish Franciscans from Mexico established Mission San Agustín, the first European structure in the vicinity.

Doelle follows a regular procedure. The first step is a systematic survey. Doelle and as many as two dozen fellow workers walk over the landscape in broad swaths, perhaps twenty-five yards apart. This is a fundamental new-archaeology technique that allows one to get the lay of the land: big settlement here, smaller, satellite settlements there, and so on. Do any compelling patterns emerge?, Doelle asks. He brings in a hydrologist to read the landscape and tell him about the history of the area's water supply over the past several thousand years. How, he may want to know, have the paths of the riverbeds changed? Then Doelle makes a decision about where, if anywhere, to dig. In which place or places, given limited time and resources, does excavation make the most sense? Finally Doelle brings what he has found back to his laboratory for evaluation and analysis. Where, he may ask,

(Continued on page 39)

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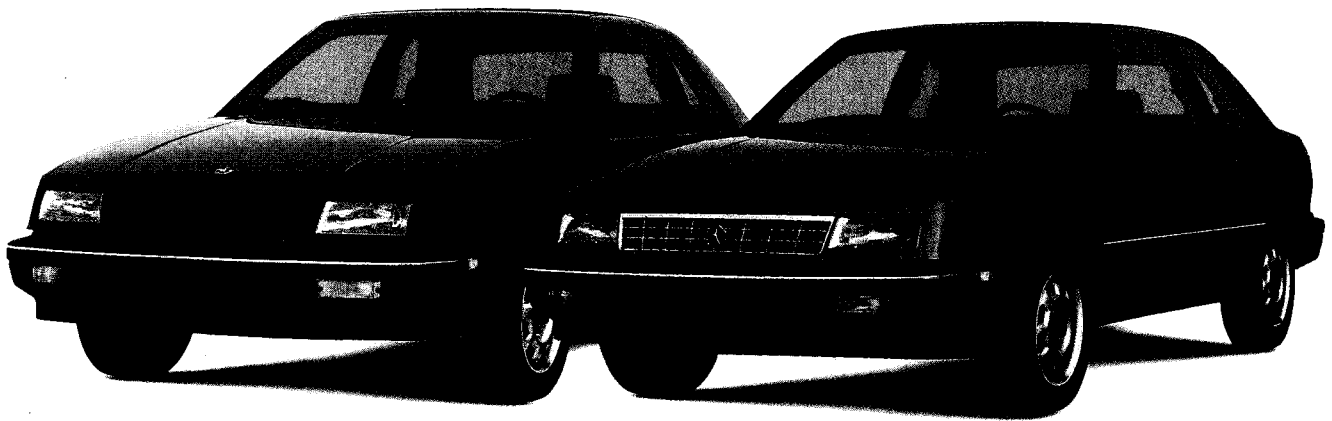
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MUSIC

by Milo Miles and Matthew Gurewitsch

Shirley a hit

On gloomy days it can seem as though every female singer in America is a sumptuous, vapid model, a one-woman corporation, or a clique of bouncy teenagers. That's the time to play some Shirley Horn. After her splashy debut, in the late fifties, the pianist and jazz singer with the tinge of smoke in her voice has been a regular attraction in her hometown of Washington, D.C., for more than thirty years. In her own way, at once casual and meticulous, she has staged a vigorous comeback with the jazz audience in the last two years.



Shirley Horn

With any justice, a superlative pop crossover should be Horn's next phase. The cargo of guest luminaries like Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis on her new *You Won't Forget Me* (Verve) will smooth the way. Not that Horn's work needs added luster. Although her preferred mode is the leisurely love ballad and some of her mentors and favorites—Ahmad Jamal, Quincy Jones, Antonio Carlos Jobim—seem rather plush, her delivery is drenched in unsentimental blues and never designed for easy comfort.

On *You Won't Forget Me*, Horn works with a pair of her long-term rhythm-section accompanists, bassist Charles Ables and drummer Steve Williams, or bassist Buster Williams and drummer Billy Hart, who expertly pare away notes and beats until the trio attains the hypnotic hush necessary for the leader to pore over song lyrics and the passions locked in them.

—M.M.

Trad all over

Although pianist Marcus Roberts threatened to disappear playing in the shadow of Wynton Marsalis as a member of his regular band, the solo albums *The Truth Is Spoken Here* and *Deep in the Shed* indicate that Roberts may be the most probing and intricate composer and player of the neotraditionalists. Because the neotrad movement is dedicated to conserving the jazz canon, a

collection of standards like Roberts's *Alone with Three Giants* (RCA) cannot discharge surprise voltage the way avant-gardists do. Even so, Roberts makes fresh comments on Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, and Jelly Roll Morton, whom he roughly defines, respectively, as elegant dignity, mercurial introspection, and fun with whopping bass lines. If the project occasionally drifts toward an exercise by a sober scholar, the overriding tenor is pride—Roberts's pride in the mighty citadel of music he explores, and pride in his outstanding craftsmanship. As we know, pride is often close to joy.

Roberts will be touring the country in March and April.

—M.M.



Marcus Roberts

Crème Boulez

Les *Liaisons Dangereuses* (Risk Relations) is a title that could only have been conceived in its original language. French, the language of mathematical coordinates, of the discourse on method, of Descartes; French, the language of sensuality, of obsession, of Proust. But how many Frenchmen encompass such opposition?

Pierre Boulez, the composer and conductor, does, which should make his guest appearances with the virtuosic Cleveland Orchestra in programs of Debussy, Bartók, and Stravinsky (February 28 to March 9, 216-231-1111) uncommonly heady.



Cleveland Orchestra

In Debussy's cloud-swept *Images* no less than in Stravinsky's volcanic *Sacre du Printemps*, expect the music to unfold with an exactly calibrated, Olympian detachment in which the lineaments and passions stand radiantly revealed.

—M.G.

Latin lesson

Singer, songwriter, and producer Juan Luis Guerra and the trio who sing with him as the group 4.40 are among the most flexible and adept style blenders in Latin music. Guerra's two most recent albums, *Ojalá que Llave Café* and *Bachata Rosa* (both on Karen) are shot through with flashes of salsa and rock as well as the "quiet storm"-style of soul crooning—everything grounded in an uncommonly sleek brand of meringue from the Dominican Republic. A bilingual music culture has become inevitable in this country and the beneficiaries should all be as fervent and concise as Guerra.

—M.M.

Voicing interest

As the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's season winds to a close, both the incoming and outgoing music directors are offering programs whose success will ride in large part on a female vocalist. Mahler's orchestral song cycle



Sir Georg Solti

Das Lied von der Erde (April 25 to May 7) calls for a soloist who in the final movement can sustain the mood of still yet brimming melancholy for an entire half-hour. Waltraud Meier, the German mezzo-soprano who sings the part under the new music director, Daniel Barenboim, possesses the right concentration, dignity, and refinement of tone and phrase to stay the course. Sir Georg Solti, ending his CSO tenure with a flourish, introduces at home in Orchestra Hall (March 28 to April 11) and also at Carnegie Hall (April 15 and 18) Sir Michael Tippett's new *Byzantium*, tailored to the majestic talents of Jessye Norman, a sympathetic master of his high bardic strain, able to mesmerize even when he tips into the precious and obscure.

—M.G.

■ Milo Miles comments on world music for National Public Radio's Fresh Air.

■ Matthew Gurewitsch, a senior editor at Connoisseur magazine, concentrates on the performing arts.

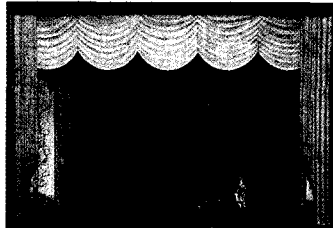
DANCE

by Laura Jacobs

Beauty sleeps no more

First danced on the stage of the Maryinsky in the garland dance in *The Sleeping Beauty*. . . I also appeared as a cupid on one of the carriages" in the finale. For the young George Balanchine, this wasn't just experience, it was epiphany: "Thanks to *Sleeping Beauty*, I fell in love with ballet."

Balanchine never forgot his debt to *Beauty*. In fact, all his life he was channeling *Sleeping Beauty*'s spells and visions into his ballets. Glimpses and ghost images reveal themselves every-



New York City Ballet

where: the ballerina's sleepy spiral in *Symphony in C*; the castle-keep courtship in *Theme and Variations*; the cool-cat

crooks and modernist angles that recall the sparring cats of Act IV; the sighing forest of *Emeralds*. *Beauty* has been very much alive at NYCB—an essence, a recurring dream.

Bringing this quintessential classical work—the highest achievement

of Petipa and Tchaikovsky—to the State Theatre stage was one of Balanchine's oldest, fondest wishes. Holding that dazzling Imperial memory so close to his heart, he was loath to do it halfway. Money, timing, and age conspired

against Balanchine; he never got to it.

At last, this spring, the New York City Ballet will bring a full-length production to the stage. In true City Ballet style, it will be a swifter, streamlined version, two acts with one intermission. But the whole endeavor promises to be sumptuous, as Mr. B would have wanted it. David Mitchell's early set designs showed a gossamer, golden touch, a *Beauty* brushed with fairy dust. The choreography is by Peter Martins "after" Petipa and Balanchine's own "Garland Dance" will be included, creating the kind of poignant symmetry that so delighted him and that is the soul of classicism.

NYCB's *Sleeping Beauty* will make its premiere on April 24 and then run through May 5 for a total of fifteen performances. For tickets call 212-307-7171.

Twyla zone

Twyla Tharp has been making chatty, daydreamy, witty, belligerent, boastful, brooding dances for decades. For about twenty of those years she had her own company, which specialized in that unprecedented high-tech, low-slung Tharp style, a mix of mugging and muck-raking. Tharp's work is about articulation. That's why Baryshnikov was such a boon to her: he could dance Shakespeare soliloquies, in pig Latin. And that's why ballet welcomed her, but did not ultimately invite her to stay. For though Tharp dances are high-toned, they're rarely high-flown. From the start she has been colloquial, blunt, dogged.



Sue's Leg

With her own company disbanded and her co-artistic directorship at American Ballet Theatre (a qualified success) over, there's been no consistent way to satisfy a craving for Tharp. But ABT will perform four of the dances this spring at the Met (May 4 to June 12, 212-362-6000). And Hubbard Street Dance Company, an eclectic Chicago troupe known for its perfect timing, has come to the rescue of the early non-ballet works. Hubbard Street has acquired the bare-bones, musicless, thornily existential *The Fugue*, a treacherously difficult study of baroque will, and also two peri-

od idylls, the fool-around *Sue's Leg* and the creamy *Baker's Dozen*. The company gives the trio their local premiere during its engagement at Chicago's Civic Center for Performing Arts, March 12 to 23, whereupon the dances will enter repertory for three years—an important acquisition for Hubbard Street, Tharp, and us. For tickets call 312-902-1500. In April and May Hubbard Street will tour Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, and Minnesota.

Tour de force

I am the eye with which the Universe/Beholds itself and knows itself divine," intones the young sun god in Shelley's "Hymn of Apollo." Montreal's Cirque du Soleil (Circus of the Sun) is equally bold in its claims. This pared-down, one-ring circus folds a fascination for medieval extremes into an avant-garde consciousness. Animals have been eschewed; or rather, it is the hairless *homo sapiens* for whom the whip cracks. Part Pilobolus, part performance art, Cirque du Soleil gazes on the human body in all its freakish strength, grace, and acrobatic absurdity. In place of a ringmaster's bark there is René Dupéré's New Age music—this circus goes with the flow. The show is in Costa Mesa, California (714-740-2000), through March 7 and then comes to New York's Battery Park City (212-307-7171) on April 11 for a lengthy engagement.

A Royal engagement

Anyone who wants to see London's latest sensation, the young ballerina Darccey Bussell, had better plan now: the Royal Ballet will make a two-week (March 12 to 24), one-city stop in America, at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in Washington, D.C.

Also on the roster are that slinky Parisian Sylvie Guillem and Irek Mukhamedov, Russia's answer to Sir Lancelot. Highlights include *Swan Lake* and the new *Prince of the Pagodas*. For tickets call 202-467-4600.



Darccey Bussell

Spruce Russes

You don't have to be a balletomane to be fascinated by *The Art of the Ballet Russes: The Russian Seasons in Paris 1908-1929*. This beautiful book, the most complete assemblage of the company's set and costume designs ever produced, is an indispensable visual guide to that twenty-year champagne cocktail of music, art, fashion, and ballet—the Diaghilev era (Abbeville Press, \$75).

■ Laura Jacobs is editor-in-chief of Stagebill and dance critic for The New Leader.

THEATER

by Matthew Gurewitsch

A rare Molière



Jean Stapleton

The *Learned Ladies* stands in the rank of Molière's supreme creations. The ladies in question, like Shakespeare's pedants in *Love's Labour's Lost*, have "eat paper, as it were" and "drunk ink," and the diet has turned their wits. There is, in fact, no learning in Chrysale's *haut bourgeois* household; but his bossy wife, Philaminte, uses a grotesque show of it to tyrannize her entire family. Her sister and her older daughter have reason to play along. They wave telescopes, critique poetry, and censure other people's vocabulary to mask raging erotic frustrations. The independent younger daughter takes abuse for admitting her wish to marry. In this loony bin, the course of true love does not run smooth.

Nowhere is Molière's famous eye for satire keener, his accounting of domestic politics and betrayals more scrupulous and precise, yet *The Learned Ladies* has never been a popular favorite. A stylish verse translation by Richard Wilbur has given it what presence it has lately had on the American stage. His is the version Denver audiences will hear when the play comes to the Germinal Stage Denver (May 5 to June 2, 303-455-7108). By a coincidence the learned ladies might like to anatomize, another production (starring Jean Stapleton) will have just closed in New York at the CSC Repertory (March 6 to April 7, 212-677-4210), a shoe-string operation in the East Village run by a genuinely learned lady, the estimable Carey Perloff. She, however, is using a new translation, also in rhyme, by Freyda Thomas. "I felt that for us today," Perloff explains, "it would take a woman's perspective to make the ladies come alive."



Very good indeed

"Your Excellency, I will endeavour to speak Mr Farquhar's lines with the elegance and clarity their own worth commands." Are these words beautiful? In Timberlake Wertenbaker's superb new play, *Our Country's Good*, they are more. Spoken by a convict just reprieved from the gallows to act her part in *The Recruiting Officer* (she has no understudy), they mark the birth of a soul set free from lifelong abjection. In context, their beauty is awesome.

Our Country's Good takes place in the first Australian penal colony, where preparations are under way for the continent's first-ever theatrical. The director and leading man is an officer; the remaining cast are prisoners. The bare bones of the plot come from Thomas Keneally's novel *The Playmaker* (also superb), but Wertenbaker fleshes them out as a meditation entirely her own on the hopelessly tangled spiritual causes and consequences of artistic endeavor.

Our Country's Good will be at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre (April 25 to June 13, 415-845-4700) before going to Broadway.

Public acclaim

The legendary Joseph Papp has done two brave things lately: passed the artistic leadership of his New York Shakespeare Festival on to four younger directors, and just said no to grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Safety be damned! And suddenly, his institution is once again bursting with juice.

Since September, when the curtain rose on this new order, the choice of plays has been out-of-the-way (a feminist proto-Mamet from the twenties, a tragedy of honor by the so-called Japanese Shakespeare, a first-rate Brecht transposed from the Caucasus to the Caribbean) and the performances have bristled with notions not preconceived.

Now come two glosses on seduction: William Congreve's Restoration comedy *The Way of the World*, opening April 16, and Constance Congdon's new *Casanova*, previewing April 23. If Congreve's brittle confection is to live up to its reputation for brilliance, the company has its work cut out—but gambles such as this make the new game at the Public worth the candle.

For tickets call 212-598-7150.

Sharing in Shakespeare



Mark Lamos

Many experts make a mystery of Shakespeare's verse and pretend that American actors can't hack it. Actually, all it takes to solve any riddle in this area is an intelligent construction of Shakespeare's meaning.

Sense, not meter, is what carries a player from thought to thought, and from thought to action—as much in Shakespeare's verse as in his (no less astonishing) prose. If what we like to hear is incantation, well and good—and, yes, we are more apt to get it from the dwindling cadre of old-school Britons. But let no one suppose that theirs is the only way. If Shakespeare is universal—and who denies it?—he belongs to us too.

Two directors who have proved this point where it counts most—on the stage—are Michael Maggio, a comparative novice, at Chicago's Goodman Theatre, and Mark Lamos, who has been mounting Shakespeare with flair and passion at the Hartford Stage for a decade. New chapters in their series of nimbly spoken, briskly thought explorations are due: a *Midsummer Night's Dream* for Chicago (March 8 to April 20, 312-443-3800) and a *Julius Caesar* for Hartford (March 23 to April 27, 203-527-5151).



Michael Maggio

19-inch theater

The Steppenwolf Theater's spare yet powerful dramatization of *The Grapes of Wrath* reaches PBS on March 22. Also on PBS: Peter Brook's world-traveled epic *The Mahabharata*, airing as a six-hour miniseries, March 25 to 27. Hindu wisdom of the ages or Classic Comics hokey? You decide.

■ Matthew Gurewitsch, a senior editor at *Connoisseur* magazine, concentrates on the performing arts.

CHARLES ERICKSON

BEAVER BAUER

JENNIFER GIRARD

FOR THOSE WITH TO THROW AROUND AND

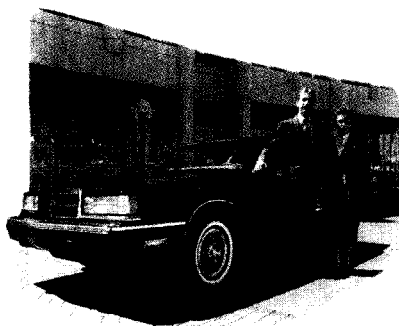
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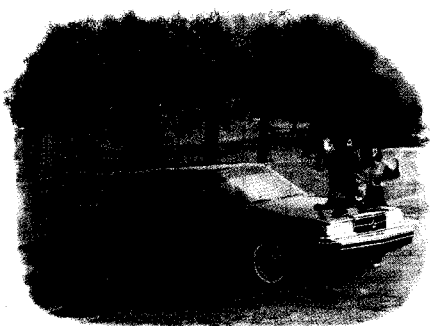
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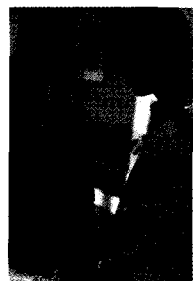
FILM

by Ella Taylor

One critic's picks: The films that deserve the Oscars

Since the Academy of Motion Pictures has not seen fit to consult me about the 1990 Oscar nominations, I've exercised the liberties of the disenfranchised and generated my own list of winners, as much whimsical as it is alternative.

Best Picture: Los Angeles filmmaker Charles Burnett's *To Sleep With Anger*, a quietly subversive account, with magical overtones, of the tensions in a black L.A.



To Sleep With Anger

family that bubble to the surface when a Southern visitor (brilliantly played by Danny Glover) shows up with a malicious agenda.

Runner-Up: Michael Roemer's antic black-and-white comedy *The Plot Against Harry* (available on video-cassette), made in

1968 and shelved until it enchanted festival-goers in 1989, about a newly paroled two-bit numbers racketeer who sits uncomfortably on the margins of the crime world he's been edged out of and the overheated Bronx Jewish family he's reluctantly rejoined.

Best Director: New Zealand director Jane Campion, whose off-the-wall tragicomedy *Sweetie* (on video), about a family that lends new meaning to the term "dysfunctional," combines the tough-minded sympathy of Flannery O'Connor with the obscene shock tactics of David Lynch.

Runner-Up: Bertrand Tavernier, for the symphonic, blue-lit beauty of *Life and Nothing But*, with Philippe Noiret delivering his usual mix of irony and grumpy nobility as a French army officer obsessively counting the dead and missing after World War I.

Best Actor: Robert De Niro, for his intelligent restraint in two radically different roles: the alternatively catatonic and hyperactive victim of encephalitis in *Awakenings*, and a quietly lethal thug in *Goodfellas*.

Runner-Up: Bruce Davison, for his unassuming dignity as the rich playboy in *Longtime Companion* (on video) who



Longtime Companion

quietly knuckles down and cares for his AIDS-stricken lover.

Best Actress: Anjelica Huston, surprising us again with her range, as the intense but chilly blonde con artist in Stephen Frears's *The Grifters*.

Runner-Up: Helen Mirren, for lighting up Peter Greenaway's otherwise nauseating *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, as the glamorous but abused wife.

Humanitarian Avon Lady Award: Dianne Wiest in *Edward Scissorhands*.

Grudging Admiration Award: David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*, Barbet Schroeder's *Reversal of Fortune*, and Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas*. All three are entertaining, high-spirited, imaginative films whose moral implications—unsavory, cynical, or cripplingly ambivalent—dawned on me only after I'd left the theaters. In *Wild at Heart*, Lynch offers us a choice between two rotten visions: one filled with brutality and sexual loathing, the other with trashy, Hallmark-card schmaltz. In *Reversal of Fortune*, Jeremy Irons (beautifully) renders Claus von Bülow as an engaging cad you'd love to invite to a dinner party. And in *Goodfellas*, Scorsese approaches the callow gangland he depicts so well with more infatuation than critique.

Silliest Costume Award: This goes to the gigantic yellow braids that weighed down poor Glenn Close's head, making her look like Elly May Clampett from *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Unfortunately she was playing Hamlet's mother for Franco Zeffirelli at the time.

Best Supporting Actor in a Strange Comedy: Crispin Glover's medieval, pointy-nosed face and twitchily incoherent body movements have destined him for whacked-out roles in weird com-

edies. Glover made his debut as Michael J. Fox's nerdy father in Robert Zemeckis's *Back to the Future*, then got serious as the psychopathic group leader Layne in Tim Hunter's *River's Edge* (both available on video). Last year Glover distinguished himself in the field of menacing lunacy: first as Suzie Amis's posturing brother in Michael Almereyda's *Twister* (also on video), and then in *Wild at Heart* as Laura Dern's cousin Dell, who festooned himself with cockroaches and reveled in a nocturnal orgy of sandwich-making.

Glover brings an exhilaratingly out-of-bounds edge to the sophomoric mainstream of American film comedy. I look forward with fascinated horror to his next role in Tristar's March 1 release of Oliver Stone's *The Doors*, based on the career of Jim Morrison's rock band. Glover stars as—of all people—Andy Warhol.

■ Ella Taylor is chief film critic of L.A. Weekly.



Crispin Glover



JUST FOR LAUGHS

Chrysler Corporation, which has provided this Arts & Entertainment Preview, also brings arts and comedy programming to the small screen. Comedic case in point: A&E's *An Evening at the Improv*, broadcast Monday through Saturday at 11 P.M. EST on the Arts & Entertainment Network, available on cable systems nationwide. The show, taped live at the L.A. Improv, features a different host and lineup of comics each night. Upcoming hosts include Ed Asner, Paul Sorvino, and Mesach Taylor.

Since its inception, in 1984, A&E has received more Awards for Cable Excellence than any other basic cable network, including nominations for the Golden ACE, cable's highest honor.



(Continued from page 30)

did the sand and clays in certain pottery fragments come from? What can the presence of different pottery styles tell us about technology and trade? The final product, inevitably, is a fat report with a title like "Excavations at the Valencia Site," and it may contain not only a dense archaeological analysis but also, as the Valencia report does, a recommendation that the site be protected (it has been so far).

I came away from Desert Archaeology with a knapsack full of site reports. Having skimmed a few of them in Doelle's office, I could see that they would make for interesting reading: each one is a kind of *Winesburg, Ohio*, by a Sherwood Anderson who arrived a millennium too late. A few miles from Doelle's office I found myself crossing the dry bed of the Santa Cruz River on a road that I suddenly realized would take me past the Valencia site. From the road it looked like nothing but a thirty-acre parcel of desert scrub, and signs all around it discouraged trespassing. But the maps in Doelle's report on the site proved to be too appealing. I spent the next hour or so tramping over the unmarked and uneven ground, deriving a quiet satisfaction from the knowledge, imparted by the legend and tiny contour lines on a piece of paper, that now I was standing in the ball court, now in the great plaza, now in the entranceway of a rich person's house.

DURING OUR conversation Doelle spoke frankly to me about some of the criticisms of contract archaeology and cultural-resource management. For one thing, he said, there are fly-by-night companies in the business. He remembered one in Tucson that "blew in from out of town" and was awarded a choice piece of work at a Hohokam Indian site on a riverbank. The company, he said, really knew nothing about Hohokam archaeology and, after sinking a hole and discovering a lot of ancient rubbish, concluded that all of the material had simply been washed down by the river over the years to some natural collecting point. The company told the developers to go ahead and build. In fact what they had found was a garbage pit, which should have tipped them off to the presence of a settlement. The Hohokam, Doelle said, "were very neat about where they

put their trash, and it built up in large piles. What the company found and didn't realize and therefore didn't save was a whole village."

A duller but more important issue raised by contract archaeology has to do with the interpretation and reporting of results. An archaeologist can come in, apply some rote techniques, dig neat, photogenic pits, count and record and preserve everything he finds, fill out lots of forms, and yet contribute basically nothing of significance to our stock of knowledge. "Not doing something with what you've found, not evaluating it in the context of its environment or thinking about it in terms of a problem, is bad archaeology," Doelle said. But so much archaeology is being performed in the United States these days, particularly in the Southwest, that the task of analysis can be overwhelming. Contract archaeologists typically face tight deadlines. Their work is labor-intensive and expensive, and profit margins are thin. They can't afford to put off the next project. When something has to give, it is frequently the quality of the work's academic side. While most projects do result in a site report, not every site report that gets written was worth writing.

To get some idea of how much material has been coming out of the ground in recent years, I visited the Western Archeological and Conservation Center of the National Park Service, in Tucson, which since 1980 has been the official repository for every artifact turned up on national parklands in the Far West, the Southwest, and the Rocky Mountains. The center, which once consisted mostly of offices and laboratories, had to build a storeroom to hold its rapidly growing collection, and I was shown around the place by George Teague, a Park Service archaeologist, and John Clonts, who at the time was the director of the repository.

The storeroom, which is about the size of an airplane hangar, is climate-controlled and filled with row upon row of free-standing metal shelving units, ten feet high and set close together. On the shelves were thousands of cardboard cartons, most of them about the size of a case of wine. (Some of them *were* wine cases.) As we walked up and down the aisles, Teague pointed out the objects we were passing, his voice settling into a

laconic litany. "All this stuff here is nothing but corn cobs," he said, "and over here are soil samples . . . and unworked bone . . . and shards . . . more soil samples . . . and pots . . . more pots. . . . As you can see, we have lots of pots . . . and more soil samples . . . and here are some sandals . . . and fabric . . . and some more soil samples."

As we left the storeroom, John Clonts paused at the door and gazed at the collection as if to take it all in. "You're looking at a million objects," he said to me, "but I can't tell you exactly what's in this room. An inventory of what we have now won't be finished for a couple of years, and by then we'll have a lot more. We can't elect not to accept something once it's been found. We've already got decades of work in front of us, and the stuff is coming in faster and faster all the time."

WHAT IS ONE to make of contract archaeology? I've asked that question of many archaeologists, in and out of the business. Their answers have usually consisted of a measured pavane between "on the one hand" and "on the other," and of a recognition that the shift toward contract archaeology is in any case permanent.

On the one hand, I was told, the various statutes on which cultural-resource management depends amount to a kind of extortion, practiced on taxpayers and developers. Contract archaeology, critics say, has become something like an entitlement program—welfare for archaeologists. Many of the excavations done by contract archaeologists are far too hurried, and many of the studies that result don't really contribute very much to scholarship. Besides, the direction of scholarly research shouldn't be determined by the profit motive, or by the fact that someone wants to build a house or an office building in a certain place. Contract archaeology threatens to make the profession into the sort of thing you could learn at trade school. And really, it's appalling the way some developers exploit the publicity surrounding any finds on their property—naming a subdivision Indian Acres, for heaven's sake.

On the other hand, I was told, extortion is a hoary tool of public policy, and anyway, Americans on the whole seem genuinely pained by the needless loss

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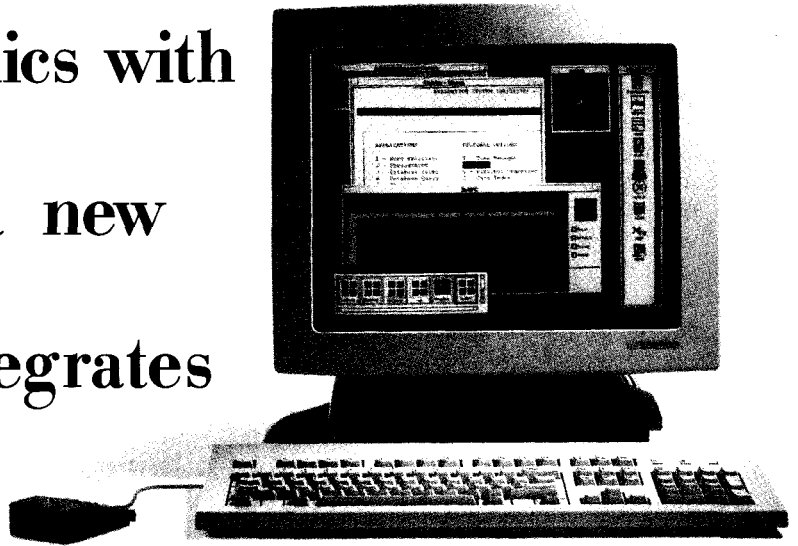
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of the nation's past and are not averse to paying a little conscience money. Sure, some of the resulting scholarship is irrelevant or second-rate, but this is partly because contract archaeologists, unlike academic ones, are supposed to produce something on paper every time they turn dirt. In any event, proponents point out, the scholarship by all accounts is getting better. During the past ten or fifteen years contract archaeologists in various parts of the country have brought new depth to our understanding of local and regional prehistory. Twenty years ago the chronology of events among the Indian cultures in southern Arizona during the several thousand years before the Spanish conquest was known in only the most limited way. Today the details of that chronology are well established within a margin of about fifty years. Twenty years ago views of American prehistory were skewed by findings from a relatively small number of major sites. Today archaeologists have a surer feel for the texture of whole societies.

As for contract archaeology's being welfare, at the very least it's workfare. The thousands of people who have found work in contract archaeology are, after all, out there in the blazing sun all day trying to preserve a few things of significance and mitigating the unavoidable damage everywhere else. Archaeology is hard work, and contract archaeologists work longer hours and under far greater pressure than most academic archaeologists do. All in all, proponents say, the millions we spend are a small price to pay.

"People are always talking about 'getting more bang for the buck,'" George Teague said when we met. "I think we get a lot of bang already. Not long ago I was called down to Chiricahua National Monument, where they wanted to expand a parking lot. We surveyed the land where they wanted to put it and we found something there and started to dig. What we found turned out to be the remains of Camp Bonita, which was one of the first camps in the West to be manned by an all-black cavalry unit. Its location had been completely forgotten. We got them to put the parking lot someplace else, and now they've got an exhibit mounted down there about Camp Bonita. But you see, you wouldn't find things like that unless this whole system of laws was in place."

One may take his point or leave it, but the fact remains that archaeology, like engineering and other academic disciplines that have practical or "applied" implications, has established itself in permanent fashion outside academe. In the process it has become diffused nationwide, with local archaeological digs now a staple of small-town newspapers. And it may be that these excavations, even when they turn up little and tell us less, are worthwhile. In wholesome societies the recognition of impermanence is no small part of conscience.

—Cullen Murphy

LEAH WEINICK



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VIETNAM

Shut Out

*The U.S. embargo on
Vietnam does not prevent other
countries from doing business there,
but it does prevent the country
from rebuilding itself*

THE U.S. ATTEMPT to starve Vietnam out, through a political and economic embargo, is senseless. Most Americans are not even aware that such a campaign is under way. After all, within the past year the U.S. government has re-approved most-favored-nation trade status for China, prepared to donate food to the

Soviet Union, found a way to coexist with the brutal new SLORC regime in Burma, and applied a forgive-and-forget economic policy to most nations other than Iraq. But in Vietnam the U.S. embargo remains the central fact of economic life. It makes existence undeservably miserable for many millions of people, while doing no visible good for anyone—except, perhaps, for businessmen in Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, and Japan.

What the Vietnamese refer to as "the embargo" is really two policies. One is the U.S. government's attempt to prevent Americans from buying from, selling to, investing in, or otherwise having anything to do with Vietnam. Under prevailing Supreme Court rulings the government cannot prevent Americans from traveling to Vietnam, but it gums up other dealings with impediments large and small. AT&T and the other American phone companies will not place a call from the United States to Vietnam. (If you want to send a fax to a university or a government office in Vietnam, you send it instead to someone in Bangkok—or, for that matter, Toronto—and ask to have it passed on. The people most harshly affected by the phone ban are, of course, the million or so Vietnamese-Americans, many of whom have relatives in Vietnam.) Last year several thousand U.S. citizens, most of them Vietnamese-Americans or U.S. military veterans, traveled to Vietnam—but the Lindblad travel agency, in Connecticut, lost more than \$500,000 in fines and legal fees for daring to organize such tours and subsequently declared bankruptcy. Tours are legally and profitably organized by several big agencies in Bangkok. Air Vietnam, which has a monopoly on flights within the country, carries passengers on a fleet of dirty and decrepit Soviet planes. Yet when the airline was angling last year to buy an Airbus from Europe, the U.S. government discouraged the sale, because the plane's engines are made by General Electric. Hotels and government shops in Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon, have bright new signs saying that Visa cards are accepted—but not if you are a U.S. citizen, or if the card was issued in the United States, or if it is drawn on an American bank. In those circumstances the Vietnamese won't take the card, because U.S. Treasury Department regulations

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forbid the banks to pay. The U.S. dollar is in practice the legal tender of Vietnam. Trade contracts are denominated in dollars; hotel and restaurant prices are set in dollars; visitors from Japan, Italy, and even the Soviet Union must carry around wads of U.S. currency with which to settle their bills. Yet under the charmingly named Trading With the Enemy Act, the U.S. government behaves as if every one of those dollars were there illegitimately. The United States was intimately involved with Vietnam for more than a decade. Now Vietnam is one of only a handful of countries with which the

work of loans, international credits, financial restructuring plans, and so forth that countries from Ghana to Peru to Bangladesh can participate in. (Technically, the IMF excludes Vietnam not because of the embargo but because Vietnam hasn't paid off some \$140 million in old debts. Vietnam is hardly the only Third World country in arrears. Its problem could be cleared up with bridge loans, as has been done in many other countries, if Japanese and American banks could get involved.) Apart from the Soviet Union—which has for the past decade subsidized Vietnam's economy, re-

ple, rebuild roads not maintained for twenty years, and renovate antique seaports and airports is more than any private investor will put up. Since the end of the Second World War mammoth infrastructure projects in many parts of the world have typically been sponsored by the World Bank or other international lending organizations; this is how Japan built its Bullet Train system in the 1960s. Other countries throughout Asia draw constantly on World Bank and Asian Development Bank advice and loans. Vietnam cannot, because the United States says no. Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are inching toward cooperation on several Mekong River projects, to cope with the environmental ruin of the Southeast Asian forests. The Mekong committee's office in Hanoi has a thick folder of requests for funding; so much to monitor water quality, so much to restock fish, so much to offset the intrusion of salt water into the Mekong Delta region. None of this can go anywhere so long as Vietnam is classified as a pariah.

Americans might say that they just don't feel like subsidizing the reconstruction of Vietnam. The U.S. government's policy goes further than that: it is an attempt to keep Vietnam from rebuilding itself. Vietnam's population is very young, and most people can barely remember when U.S. troops were in their country. It is hard to see how today's Vietnamese children bear responsibility for the wounds the United States suffered during those years. Yet policies left over from the bitter 1960s and 1970s help keep them poor.

WHAT IS THE point of it all—of the small-minded restrictions on Americans and the serious limitations on Vietnam? There are two ways of judging America's policy: on the basis of what it's supposed to do, and on the effect that it actually has.

The stated rationale for the embargo has shifted over the years. The Trading With the Enemy Act, enacted in 1917 as an anti-German tool, was applied to North Vietnam in 1964, when that country was in fact the military enemy. The law was extended to the country as a whole after the North Vietnamese conquest of the South (or, to put it in the terms that are officially used in Vietnam these days, after the "Liberation" that eliminated the



In Ho Chi Minh City, goods smuggled from Thailand and Singapore

United States attempts to prevent all diplomatic and economic interaction.

The second part of the embargo policy consists of U.S. pressure on the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund to keep them, too, from dealing normally with Vietnam. Although the United States is the single biggest force in each of these organizations, on its own it cannot dictate their policies. But the Japanese representatives, who make up the second-largest voting bloc, have lined up behind the United States on this issue, and together the two countries have stonily kept most international organizations out of Vietnam. The United Nations operates a few small development-aid programs and an extensive refugee-processing system within Vietnam, but in general Vietnam must exist outside the net-

ceived tens of thousands of Vietnamese guest workers, and provided cut-rate shipments of fertilizer and oil—Sweden and Finland are the only nations that have given Vietnam substantial amounts of foreign aid.

Of the two components of the embargo, the pressure on international organizations is the more important. Vietnam has what is politely referred to as an "infrastructure problem." The roads, the telephones, the electrical-power network, and the water and sewage systems are terrible or nonexistent. I asked Vo Dai Luoc, of the Institute for World Economy, in Hanoi, "Which problem is most urgent? Transportation? Communications? Power?" He answered, "Yes"—and not because he misunderstood me. The amount of money needed to create a telephone system for 65 million peo-

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"puppet forces"), in 1975. Since 1979, when the Vietnamese completed their invasion of Cambodia, drove out Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime, and established their own dependent government, U.S. policy has been tied to events in Cambodia. For ten years the United States insisted that Vietnam withdraw its occupying forces. In the opinion of most foreign governments, Vietnam did exactly that late in 1989—as Secretary of State James Baker officially acknowledged last summer. Baker acknowledged the withdrawal, however, less as an occasion for U.S.-Vietnamese rapprochement than as evidence that the hard-line policy was working: because of American implacability, the Vietnamese had finally given in.

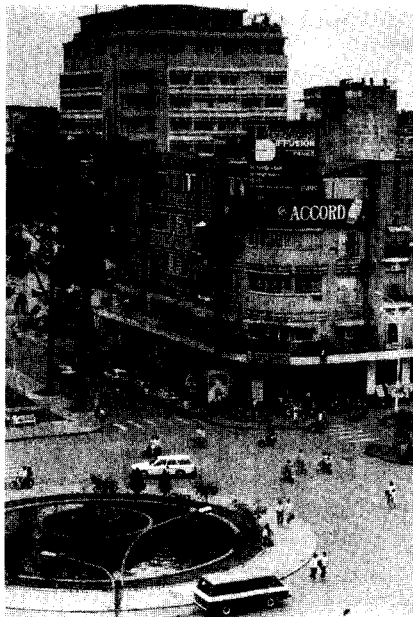
The negotiations over Cambodia's future are of hopeless, Middle East-like complexity. The essential point is that the United States is ostracizing Vietnam for the sake of a bargaining position—not because Vietnam has outraged international standards of decency. Vietnam did invade Cambodia, and does continue to prop up and manipulate the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), the nominal government of Cambodia. But China continues to prop up the Khmer Rouge, which is still directed by the same people who wrought genocide in the 1970s, and which continues to take over Cambodian territory with Chinese guns and supplies. If the United States felt inclined to get moralistic (again) about Southeast Asia, the most appropriate target for its wrath would be not Vietnam but China, without whose sustenance the Khmer Rouge could not survive. But the Bush Administration seems to act on the assumption that ancient, mighty China cannot be swayed by outside pressure. Therefore the United States continues to squeeze Vietnam.

In a way the years of squeezing have paid off. Vietnam has grown weary enough of its exile that it has compromised on some points, especially by withdrawing its troops. But its officials have consistently made clear that they can never, ever countenance the return of the Khmer Rouge. This is not so much because they are squeamish about what might happen inside Cambodia as because when the Khmer Rouge was in power, its army kept attacking villages in Vietnam. As best I

could judge from two weeks of interviews with officials in Vietnam, the emotional and logical content of their position is comparable to what Soviet leaders would now feel if Hitler were still alive and had a panzer force threatening to take control of Poland. Officially, the U.S. policy, too, is designed to keep out the Khmer Rouge. But until the Vietnamese are sure that some other, still unspecified arrangement will provide sure protection against the Khmer Rouge, they will stick with their pet PRK.

The strongest argument for continuing the embargo is that some agree-

LEAH MELNICK



Will America get back in the picture?

ment among the many squabbling Cambodian factions has seemed through the past year to be in sight. Why relax the pressure on the Vietnamese as the Soviet Union cuts back on its subsidies? But Americans could just as easily argue that now is the time to reward Vietnam for the steps it has taken, and to encourage it to take more. This is exactly the logic we have applied to China and the Soviet Union within the past year. Nguyen Co Thach, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, is known to have argued internally that Vietnam would be rewarded for withdrawing from Cambodia and undertaking its ambitious *doi moi* program of economic liberalization. As long as the embargo continues, he is proved wrong.

There is, of course, a reason why Vietnam seems less lovable and forgiv-

able than the Soviet Union of Gorbachev's reformers or the China of the Tiananmen Square demonstrators. Although U.S. policy does not explicitly link the embargo to the MIA issue, the suspicion that the Vietnamese are still locking up American prisoners, or hoarding their bones, generates considerable ill will. The Vietnamese government has not exactly helped its own cause by doling out remains two or three at a time and seeming to treat the bodies as useful bargaining chips. In 1980 a mortician who had fled Vietnam told a congressional committee that he had seen the bones or bodies of several hundred American soldiers stored in a warehouse outside Hanoi. Although the North Vietnamese Communists seemed to understand American psychology very well during the war years, the case can be made that they barely understand the United States at all. During the Carter years the Vietnamese government queered a chance for normalization by demanding reparations; only recently has the emotional power of the MIA question sunk in. Members of the American "reconciliation team" working on the POW/MIA issue say that their Vietnamese counterparts have been more cooperative in recent months.

EVEN IF IT made sense on its own big-think strategic terms, the embargo would have a serious practical limitation: it doesn't scare away anyone but the Americans. The embargo has succeeded in stunting and distorting the Vietnamese economy, and in keeping American businesses out of Indochina; but it is more and more obviously failing to keep out businesses from other countries, or to bring the Vietnamese government to its knees.

Although many nations condemned Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1979, almost no one agrees with America's embargo anymore. All other major nations have embassies in Hanoi. None imposes Trading With the Enemy-style limits on its citizens or businesses who want to trade with Vietnam. The Japanese government, with its down-the-line support of the embargo in international organizations, illustrates how shallow the enthusiasm for the embargo is. Officially it will not let Japanese firms invest in Vietnam, to avoid offending the United States.

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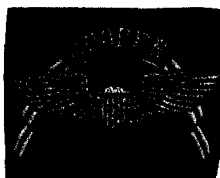
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In some cases, however, Japanese banks and corporations have channeled money through front organizations in Indonesia or Hong Kong, which then invest in Vietnam. And there is no visible restriction on Japanese trade with Vietnam. This year Japan should overtake the Soviet Union as Vietnam's leading trade partner. Japanese firms sold \$300 million to \$400 million worth of manufactured products to Vietnam last year, mainly in exchange for Vietnamese crude oil. (Although Vietnam is potentially a large oil producer, it has only a few working oil wells now, and virtually no refineries. Therefore it exports crude oil to Japan, in exchange for machinery, and has until recently relied on the Soviet Union for refined oil. The end of the Soviet-subsidized oil supply is the most immediately pressing economic problem.) All the vehicles on Vietnam's streets which are not Soviet-made are from Japan. All the refrigerators, TVs, and VCRs that are not Japanese are Korean. In Saigon's major hotels—the Rex, the Caravelle, the Majestic, and the Continental—blocks of rooms are on long-term lease to Japanese trading firms such as Nissho Iwai and Mitsubishi. One of the malicious delights of traveling in today's Vietnam is watching Germans, Soviets, Italians, and even incredulous Frenchmen being made to conduct their business in English. The Japanese businessmen and travelers I saw were doing their business largely in Japanese.

Most other countries don't even bother to keep up appearances. The Taiwanese, who have cultural and linguistic ties to the Chinese community in southern Vietnam, see no reason to abide by the American policy. After all, the United States does not even classify Taiwan as a real country anymore. (The United States has in Taipei not an embassy but an "American Institute." U.S. diplomats who are assigned there must temporarily resign from the foreign service.) Of the foreign firms with whom Vietnam has set up some 200 joint ventures since liberalizing its foreign-investment law three years ago, the most enthusiastic seem to be from Taiwan. One of the largest, called Pan Viet, is building new apartment blocks, producing ceramic tile and paint, running an agricultural-experiment station, and even planning to develop a suburb for foreign residents, with a golf course and an international

school, to be ready for Americans when they decide to come back. Companies from France, Australia, Holland, and Italy participate in other joint ventures. In all, foreign firms have invested more than \$2.2 billion in new capital.

Australia enjoys a trade surplus with Vietnam, importing fish and grains and having sold, among other things, three large satellite dishes to handle international phone calls. ("Now I can call Paris and Bangkok," an official of the Ministry of Commerce told me in Hanoi. "The problem is calling Haiphong.") There are huge billboards from the Korean corporate giants Daewoo and Samsung near the entrances of the airports in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. During my stay I met technicians from Ireland working on the telephone system, a pharmaceutical salesman from Italy, a handicrafts dealer from Holland, and a French engineer working on Vietnam's offshore oil fields. The manager of a Vietnamese shipping line guilelessly explained to me how Vietnamese handicrafts reach customers in America: first the ship goes to Vancouver, then all the documents are changed, and then it goes on to the United States. The prize for hypocrisy regarding the embargo goes easily to Singapore. Its official policy toward Vietnam is, if anything, more ferocious than that of the United States, but most of the Coca-Cola, EverReady batteries, and other Western goods stacked in markets in virtually every Vietnamese city come through merchants in Singapore. Each week passengers fly between Ho Chi Minh City and Singapore, although the flights are not listed on any schedules. Whenever an article appears describing the commercial involvement of Singapore in Vietnam, the Singapore government declares that it is simply shocked by the news.

Vietnamese officials have recently figured out that they can play on American age-of-decline insecurity in their arguments against the embargo. Shortly before the "Liberation," Mobil discovered the sizable "White Tiger" oilfield in Vietnamese waters in the South China Sea. Last year Vietnam assigned exploration rights for several sites to companies from Canada, France, Kuwait, and elsewhere, but not to U.S. firms. Mobil and Texaco, along with Citibank, have sent exploratory missions to Vietnam. The

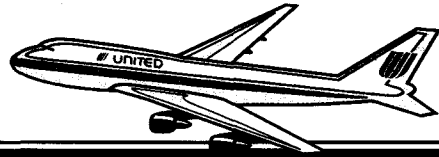
American chambers of commerce in Bangkok and Hong Kong, representing U.S. companies operating there, last year formally recommended that the embargo be lifted, to end "the continuing loss of U.S. business opportunities in Vietnam to global competitors." Raymond Eaton, an Australian businessman based in Bangkok, has become famous locally for speeches arguing that non-U.S. companies should seize the "golden opportunity" that the embargo creates and "do your very utmost to capitalize on the total inability of American companies to compete against you." (Eaton also urges the United States to eliminate the "golden opportunity" by lifting the embargo.) The manager of a building project in Hanoi told me, "We hoped very much to use American elevator equipment in our building, but, you know. . . ." Vo Dai Luoc, of the Institute for World Economy, told me, "In the past the United States spent billions of dollars to establish its influence in this part of the world. It was not possible that way, but simply by permitting business relations the United States may succeed in obtaining a role in this region."

The real reason the embargo persists, of course, is that we lost the war. That is also the reason that, although we can forgive the Soviet Union and Nicaragua, we can't forgive Vietnam—even though it is a relatively well-behaved country now, with economic-reform plans as impressive as most in Eastern Europe. Shortly before I left for Vietnam, I talked with an American politician who agreed that the embargo no longer made sense. But it might continue, out of inertia, for a long time. "It's all up to the war heroes," he said. When politicians like the senators John McCain, Robert Kerrey, and John Kerry—men who fought and suffered in Vietnam—say it is time to forgive their former enemies, he told me, then others can safely go along. But until then, he said, it is not safe or sensible even to mention the name Vietnam.

It's natural that we would prefer never to think about Vietnam again. Being involved there did us great harm. So with a kind of unconscious spite we continue a policy that hobbles an entire nation and helps us not at all, mainly because a generation ago we came to grief there. In decency we should stop.

—James Fallows

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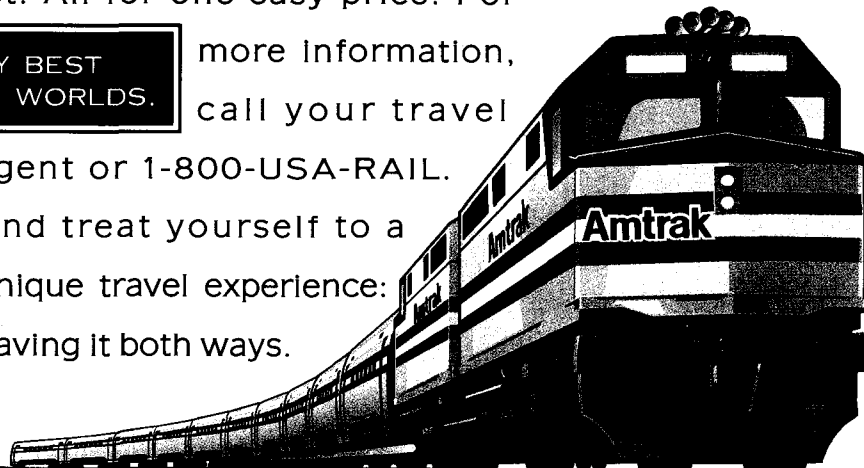
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Evidently, once you've looked beyond the obvious, it is difficult to see anything less.

The debates at American universities in recent years—over the canon of works that undergraduates should study; over a variety of issues involving race and gender; over new forms of literary criticism—seem scattered, unconnected, contained: flaring up with some regularity, to be sure, but not, it would seem, indicative of a threatening wall of fire sweeping through American higher education. In fact, however, the debates *are* linked. Commenting on controversies at Stanford and elsewhere over “what part the canon should play in the education of undergraduates,” the philosopher John Searle observed in a recent issue of *The New York Review of Books* that “the frustrating feature of the recent debate is that the underlying issues seldom come out into the open.” In this instance, he noted, the underlying issue is not the inclusion of more works by women, or more works by blacks, or more works from outside the Western tradition; that broader representation is proper and justified has been conceded. The real issues—the ones underlying a wide range of campus debates—include the assumption by many that Western values are inherently oppressive, that the chief purpose of education is political transformation, and that all standards are arbitrary. Many, further, deny any notion of objective reality.

As Dinesh D’Souza makes clear in the essay that follows, the American university today is a disturbed and sometimes disturbing place, and the consequences are by no means confined to the campus.

ILLIBERAL EDUCATION

BY DINESH D’SOUZA

I: THE VICTIMS' REVOLUTION

FOR THE PAST DECADE OR SO THE LARGER SOCIETY has not heard much from the American university, and certainly has witnessed little of the truculence and idealistic agitation that seemed to be a campus staple in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The reason for the taciturn university atmosphere of the 1980s, commentators have generally agreed, is that the current generation of young people lacks social consciousness, and cares mainly about careers and making money. Yet in the past few years the American campus has begun to stir again. Americans have been shocked to hear of a proliferation of undergraduate bigotry; at the University of Michigan, for example, a much-publicized series of racist incidents has taken place of late. At one point someone put up posters around campus that said, "A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE—ESPECIALLY ON A NIGGER." At Dartmouth College and elsewhere conservative groups and publications have sparked incidents involving race and ethnicity which range from the sophomoric to the deeply offensive. Ugly episodes on campus have typically been followed by noisy protest and even the seizure of college buildings by activists. Bewildered and horrified, the university leadership has typically adopted a series of measures to detoxify the atmosphere, ranging from pledges to reform the "white male curriculum" to censorship of offensive speech.

Thus, at Michigan, in response to the recent cases of insensitivity or flagrant bigotry, student and faculty activists demanded that all black professors be given immediate tenure, that admissions criteria such as standardized test scores be abolished, and that minority and female students be permitted to determine penalties for students whom they found guilty of making racially and sexually stigmatizing remarks. The university administration took these demands seriously and acquiesced in some of them, agreeing to expand preferential treatment for minority student and faculty applicants, and to adopt censorship regulations outlawing speech offensive to victimized groups such as "persons of color," women, and homosexuals.

It is not always possible in such disputes for a reasonable person, in good conscience, to take any side; there is a good deal of excess all around. The middle ground seems to have disappeared on campus, and whether it can be restored is an open question. But to those who visit virtually any American campus these days, read the student newspaper, talk with some of the undergraduates, and examine the notices for lectures and workshops posted on the bulletin board, it is clear that the heavily publicized racial confrontations on campus are mere symptoms of much deeper changes under way. These are changes in the intellectual and moral infrastructure of the American university, not in its outer trap-

pings. They involve not only race relations or social relations of other kinds but the very substance of the curriculum, the nature of learning, and the meaning of knowledge. Within the tall gates and old buildings a new world view is being consolidated.

This alteration of the principles of liberal education—most notably the very concept of academic standards—is occurring with little public scrutiny. The outcry over the abolition of Western "great books" curricula and over the enforcement of "politically correct" speech on campus has so far been passionately superficial, posing false dichotomies (Should students read Plato or the Koran? Should universities practice censorship or tolerate blatant bigotry?) and missing the underlying principles that are shaping the dramatic changes in universities. Thus, despite the attention currently being lavished on the politics of race and sex on campus, there is, says Donald Kagan, the dean of Yale College, "a troubling ignorance outside the university of what is going on." The transformation of American campuses is so sweeping that it is no exaggeration to call it a revolution. Its distinctive insignia can be witnessed on any major campus in America today, and in all aspects of university life.

In the Classroom

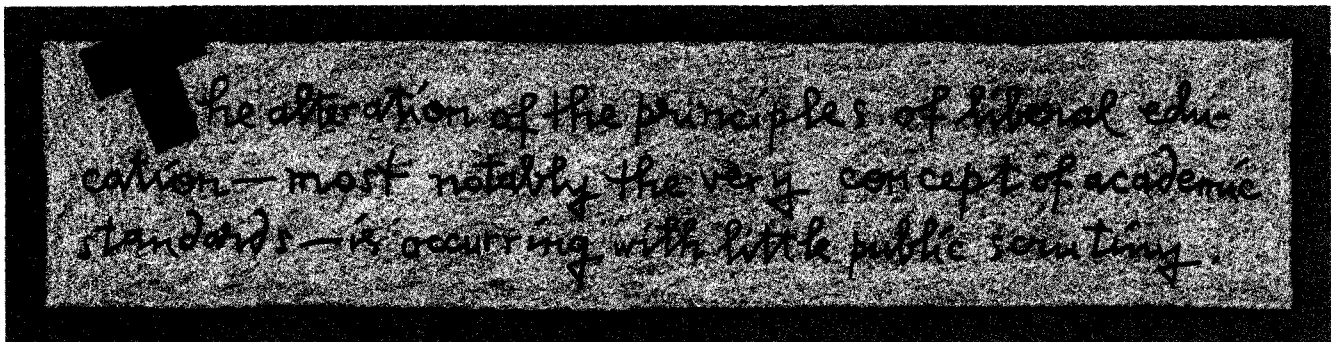
MANY AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES HAVE DILUTED or displaced their "core curriculum" in the great works of Western civilization to make room for new course offerings stressing non-Western cultures, African-American studies, and women's studies. There is little argument about the desirability of teaching the greatest works written by members of other cultures, by women, and by minority-group members. Many academic activists go beyond this to insist that texts be selected primarily or exclusively according to the author's race, gender, or sexual preference, and that the Western tradition be exposed in the classroom as hopelessly bigoted and oppressive in every way. "What we have now in universities is a kind of liberal closed-mindedness, a leveling impulse," says the sociologist David Riesman, of Harvard University. "Everybody is supposed to go along with the so-called virtuous positions." Because race and gender issues are so sensitive, several professors who have crossed the boundaries of what may be said in the classroom have found themselves the objects of organized vilification and administrative penalties. These curbs rarely apply to professors who are viewed as the champions of minority interests—they are permitted overtly ideological scholarship, and immunized from criticism even when they make excessive or outlandish claims with racial connotations.

• Early in 1988, in the most widely publicized of several

such episodes around the country, students at Stanford University, sharing a conviction that Western culture is implacably hostile to blacks and other ethnic minorities, women, and homosexuals, gathered to demonstrate against the university's undergraduate core curriculum—a curriculum focused heavily on the philosophy, literature, and history of the Western world. The students chanted, “Hey hey, ho ho, Western culture's got to go.” Ultimately, Stanford abolished its long-standing Western Culture requirement, replacing it with a program called Cultures, Ideas and Values, which stressed works on race and gender issues by Third World authors, minority-group members, and women. In practice this meant that texts such as Plato's *Republic* and Machiavelli's *Prince* would have to make way for such works as *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, the political odyssey of a Guatemalan peasant woman who discovers feminism and socialism, and Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, a passionate argument for violence against colonial oppression. In addition to Cultures, Ideas and Values, late last year Stanford added another requirement: a course focusing on racial, eth-

kind of intellectual free fall. Speaking at a conference in Washington in October of 1989, Houston Baker, of the University of Pennsylvania, argued that the American university suffers from a crisis of too much reading and writing. Instead of “valorizing old power relations,” universities should listen to the “voices of newly emerging peoples” who are challenging “Western hegemonic arrangements of knowledge.” Baker emphasized the oral tradition, extolling the virtues of rap music and holding up as exemplars such groups as Public Enemy and NWA. (NWA stands for “Niggers With Attitude”; the group sings about, among other things, the desirability of killing policemen.) Baker is regarded as one of the most promising black academics in the country.

• In the winter of 1989, at the University of Virginia Law School, Professor Thomas Bergin was conducting his usually sprightly class on property. As students responded to his queries, he shot back rebuttals and gibes, egging them on to more-thoughtful answers. It is Bergin's style to employ colloquial jargon; thus, when one black student stumbled over a question, Bergin said, “Can you



nic, and religious diversity in the United States.

• Core curricula at such places as Columbia University and the University of Chicago are now under attack in the aftermath of the Stanford transformation. At Mount Holyoke College students are required to take a course in Third World culture although there is no Western-culture requirement. At the University of Wisconsin students must enroll in ethnic-studies courses although they need not study Western civilization or even American history. At the University of California at Berkeley the faculty recently adopted an ethnic-course requirement, making this course one of the few that all undergraduates must take. Dartmouth College has a non-Western but no Western prerequisite for graduation. Cleveland State University requires a minimum of two courses dealing with African-Americans and one emphasizing a non-European culture.

• New approaches to teaching now enjoy prominence and acclaim on campus. These include a variety of new forms of criticism—now dominant in humanities departments around the country—that directly undermine the notion that traditional academic criteria have any validity. The result, as this point of view metastasizes, has been a

dig it, man?” Some students laughed, the class went on, the bell rang.

The next class day Bergin entered the room visibly shaken. “I have never been so lacerated,” he said. He read from an anonymous note calling him a “racist” and a “white supremacist” on account of his remark to the black student.

Bergin did not ask who wrote the note. He did not explain his intentions and move on to the class material. Rather, he gave the class a lengthy recital of his racial résumé: he did *pro bono* work for the civil-rights movement, he was a member of Klanwatch, which monitors hate groups, he was active in recruiting minorities to the university, and so on. Overcome with emotion, Bergin left the classroom.

• When Princeton University, in the early 1980s, debated whether to introduce a women's-studies program, which would engage in “gender scholarship” outside the traditional departments, the Dante scholar Robert Hollander expressed reservations at a faculty meeting. “I did not like the fact that this was a debate not about academic issues but about political sensitivity,” Hollander says. “My colleagues were telling me that they didn't think much of

the program but would vote for it anyway. I spoke out because I did not want to respond cynically."

Hollander remembers that when he voted against the proposed program for its stated political objectives, however, "I achieved instant notoriety. Even now, years later, my speech is the thing that some people remember most about me." After the motion passed, Hollander recalls, "female faculty members were embracing and kissing on the floor." This did nothing to diminish his concern that the debate was more about feelings than ideas, revealing an ideological rather than an academic agenda.

- The African-American scholar Leonard Jeffries claims in class that whites are biologically inferior to blacks and that the "ultimate culmination" of the white value system is Nazi Germany. Such statements are presented to students in the context of Jeffries's own theories about how the Ice Ages caused the deformation of white genes, even as black genes were enhanced by "the value system of the sun." Jeffries is the chairman of the black-studies department at City College of New York and the co-author of a controversial outline of a multicultural curriculum proposed for all public schools in New York State.
- In a manual for race, class, and gender education distributed by the American Sociological Association, Becky Thompson, a sociologist, acknowledges the ideological presuppositions of her teaching methodology:

I begin the course with the basic feminist principle that in a racist, classist and sexist society we have all swallowed oppressive ways of being, whether intentionally or not. Specifically, this means that it is not open to debate whether a white student is racist or a male student is sexist. He/she simply is. Rather, the focus is on the social forces that keep these distortions in place.

- Michael O'Brien, a professor of history at Miami University in Ohio, writes in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Academe has become a kind of parliament, with each member a self-appointed delegate from a particular constituency. Each one struggles to be heard and seeks allies in an effort to attain power." O'Brien observes that "cultural egocentricity has replaced cosmopolitanism as an ethic." The quest for "diversity" thus risks its own paradoxical forms of closure and parochialism.

In Admissions Policy

VIRTUALLY ALL AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES HAVE changed their admissions rules so that they now seek to fill a sizable portion of their freshman class each year with students from certified minority groups—mainly blacks and Hispanics—who have considerably lower grade-point averages and standardized test scores than many white and Asian-American applicants who are refused admission. Since it is sometimes difficult for minority students admitted on the basis of preferential treatment to compete, most universities also offer an array of programs and incen-

tives, including cash grants, to encourage these students to pass their courses and stay in school. The perquisites of affirmative-action policies have sometimes been extended to other groups, including Native Americans, students from Third World countries, women, Vietnam veterans, the physically disabled, homosexuals, and lesbians.

- At Berkeley black and Hispanic student applicants are up to twenty times as likely to be accepted for admission as Asian-American and white applicants who have the same academic test scores. Ernest Koenigsberg, a professor of business at Berkeley who has served on several admissions committees, asks us to imagine an applicant with a high school grade-point average of 3.5 (out of a possible 4.0) and a Scholastic Aptitude Test score of 1,200 (out of a possible 1,600). "For a black student," Koenigsberg says, "the probability of admission to Berkeley is nearly a hundred percent." However, if the same student is white or Asian-American, he says, "the probability of admission is about five percent." Koenigsberg is satisfied with such outcomes. "I suppose it's unjust, in a way, but all rules help some people and hurt others."

- At Ivy League colleges, which are among the most competitive in the nation, the typical freshman has a grade-point average close to 4.0 and an SAT score of 1,250 to 1,300. However, several of these schools admit black, Hispanic, and Native American students with grade-point averages below 3.0 and SAT aggregates under 1,000.

- A similar pattern can be found at state schools. Over the past five years the University of Virginia has virtually doubled its black freshman enrollment by accepting more than half of all blacks who apply, compared with only a quarter of whites, even though white students generally have much better academic credentials. In 1988, for example, the average white freshman at the university had scored 246 points higher on the SAT than the average black freshman. An admissions dean told *The Washington Post*, "We take more in the groups with weaker credentials and make it harder for those with stronger credentials."

- Michael Harris, a professor of history at Wesleyan University, makes the case for greater preferential treatment for minorities and loosening of academic requirements by arguing that "when you see the word 'qualifications' used, remember this is the new code word for whites."

In Life on Campus

MOST UNIVERSITIES NOW SEEK TO PROMOTE pluralism and diversity on campus by setting up and funding separate institutions for minority groups; thus one finds black student unions, black dormitories, black fraternities and sororities, black cultural centers, black dining sections,

even black yearbooks. Universities also seek to mollify minority sensitivities by imposing administrative sanctions, ranging from forced apologies to expulsion, for remarks that criticize individuals or policies in terms of racial, gender, or sexual-orientation stereotypes. "Diversity" no longer refers to a range of views on a disputed question but rather entails enlisting in a whole set of ideological causes that are identified as being "for diversity."

- Jerome Pinn, a graduate student, returned to his dormitory at the University of Michigan to discover that his new roommate had pinned up several pictures of nude men. When the young man confirmed that he was gay, Pinn approached the Michigan housing office and said he wanted to move. "They were outraged," Pinn says. "They asked me what was wrong with me—what *my* problem was. Finally they agreed that I could move, but they warned me that if I told anyone the reason, I would face university charges of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation."

- In 1987 the law school faculty of the State University of New York at Buffalo adopted a resolution that warned students not to make "remarks directed at another's race, sex, religion, national origin, age or sexual preference," including "ethnically derogatory statements, as well as other remarks based on prejudice and group stereotype." Students who violated this rule should not expect protection under the First Amendment, the faculty resolution suggested, because "our intellectual community shares values that go beyond a mere standardized commitment to open and unrestrained debate."

- According to a 1989 story in *The Wall Street Journal*, when the University of Pennsylvania was planning to require all freshmen in campus residences to participate in consciousness-raising sessions dealing with racism, sexism, and heterosexism, one undergraduate on the "diversity education" planning committee sent a note to the administration noting her reservations about the program. She expressed her "deep regard for the individual and my desire to protect the freedoms of all members of society." A university administrator sent her note back, with the word "individual" underlined and the comment, "This is a RED FLAG phrase today, which is considered by many to be RACIST. Arguments that champion the individual over the group ultimately privilege the 'individuals' belonging to the largest or dominant group."

- The *Vassar Spectator*, a student newspaper funded by the Vassar Student Association, called a black undergraduate activist, Anthony Grate, "hypocrite of the month" for espousing anti-Semitic views while publicly denouncing bigotry on campus. Reportedly, in an acrimonious outburst Grate referred to "dirty Jews" and added, "I hate Jews." Grate later apologized for his remarks. Meanwhile, apparently outraged that the newspaper had dared

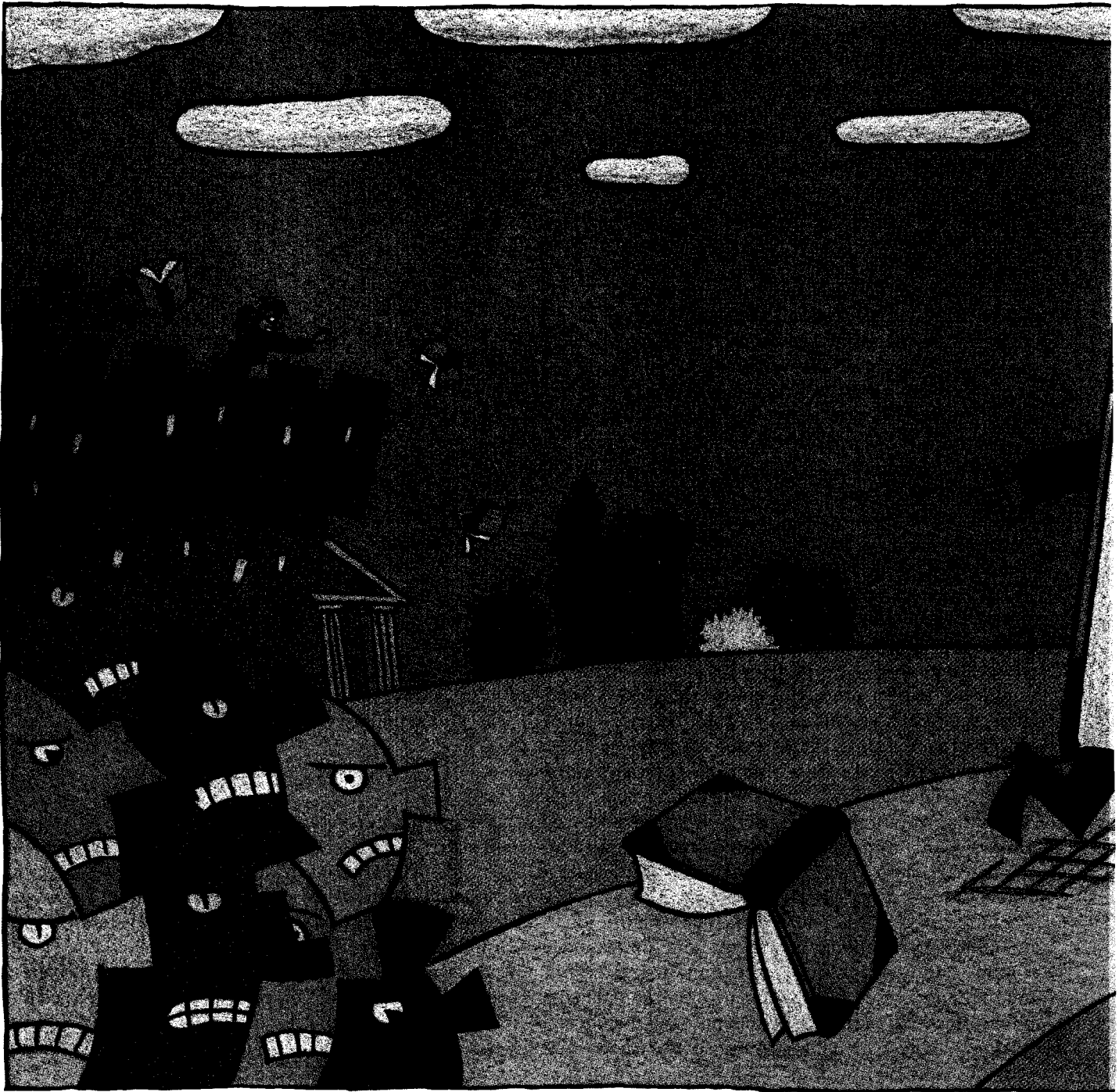


to criticize a black person, the Vassar Student Association attempted to ban its publication; when that failed, the VSA withdrew the paper's funding. The newspaper "unnecessarily jeopardizes an educational community based on mutual understanding," the VSA explained.

A Fervent Acquiescence

THE ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL REVOLUTION ON campus, as suggested by these examples, is conducted in the name of those who suffer from the effects of race and gender discrimination in America, or from the effects of Western colonialism in the Third World. It is a revolution in behalf of minority victims. Its mission is to put an end to bigoted attitudes that permit perceived social injustice to continue, to rectify past and present inequities, and to advance the interests of the previously disenfranchised—unobjectionable aims, to be sure. But because the revolutionaries view xenophobia, racism, sexism, and other prejudices to be endemic and culturally sanctioned, their project seeks a fundamental restructuring of American society. It involves basic changes in the way economic rewards are distributed, and in the way cultural and political power is exercised.

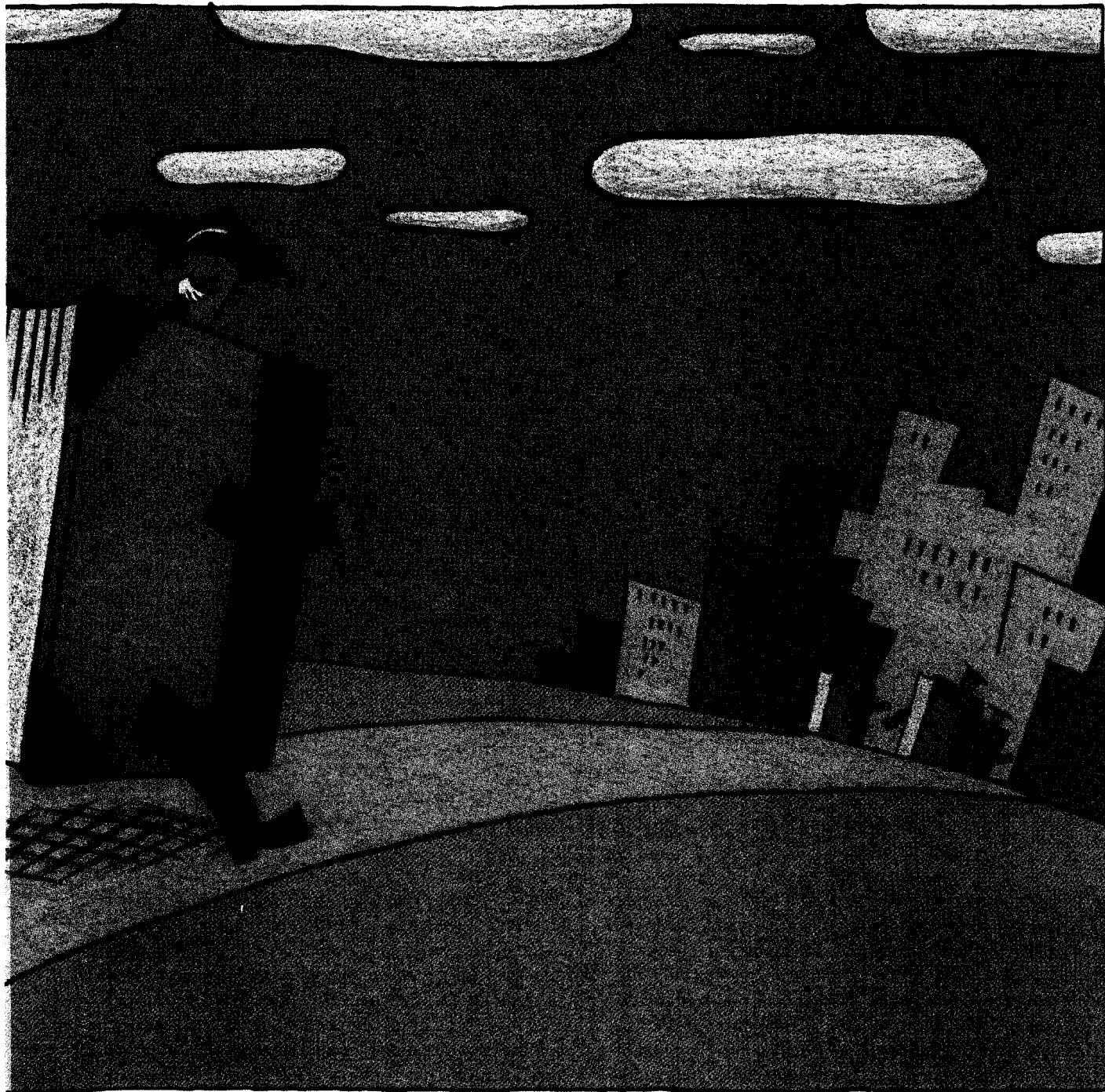
Most university presidents and deans cooperate with the project to transform liberal education in the name of minority victims. This group includes an overwhelming majority of presidents of state universities and of Ivy League schools. Only a handful of college presidents have publicly voiced reservations about the course of the academic revolution.



Many university professors have qualms, because the academic revolution challenges traditional norms of scholarship and debate. But these doubts are dissipating with time, as the composition of the American faculty changes. Older, traditionally liberal professors are retiring and making way for a new generation weaned on the assorted ideologies of the late 1960s, such as the movement for black separatism and the burgeoning causes of feminism and gay rights. Many in this new generation of scholars in the humanities and social sciences have invested their energies in the contemporary incarnation of these "domestic liberation movements." At a recent con-

ference on liberal education a reporter for *The New York Times* found the young academics in agreement that "just about everything . . . is an expression of race, class or gender."

Showing the frankness typical of many of the newly ascendant activists, the black scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of Duke University, has written, "Ours was the generation that took over buildings in the late sixties and demanded the creation of black- and women's-studies programs, and now, like the return of the repressed, we have come back to challenge the traditional curriculum." Jay Parini, a professor of English at Middlebury College,



writes, "After the Vietnam War, a lot of us didn't just crawl back into our library cubicles; we stepped into academic positions. With the war over, our visibility was lost, and it seemed for a while—to the unobservant—that we had disappeared. Now we have tenure, and the hard work of reshaping the universities has begun in earnest." Annette Kolodny, the dean of humanities at the University of Arizona, developed her ideological beliefs as a leader of the Berkeley protests of the 1960s and as a worker for Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers. "I see my scholarship as an extension of my political activism," she told a reporter. According to Kolodny, her academic

work is designed to expose "the myths the U.S. has always put forward about itself as an egalitarian nation." The United States, she argues, has "taken this incredibly fertile continent and utterly destroyed it with a kind of ravaging hatred."

These academics are the bellwethers of the victims' revolution. Already their influence is in many places dominant; soon they will displace the old guard. As it is, senior members of the humanities and social-science faculties frequently acquiesce in the changes, mildly protesting only when the issue engages their own concerns, such as the preservation of academic standards in their

classes. Outside the mainstream of the academy a small but fast-growing group called the National Association of Scholars is launching a bold but somewhat quixotic effort to arrest the pace of the revolution, an effort that has yet to show much in the way of results.

Although the revolution first shook the humanities and the social sciences, its reverberations are now being felt in law schools, medical schools, and science departments, which long considered themselves largely exempt from campus agitation. Very little seems to interrupt the revolution or stall it; changes are proposed, accepted, and implemented in broad, continuous strokes. The changes are not always indefensible; seldom, if ever, though, are they subjected to any criticism. Since the motives and the objectives of the activists seem beyond reproach, there never seems to be any need to account for the means that they employ.

There are two main reasons why the changes inside American universities are worthy of close attention. The first is that universities are facing the same questions as the rest of the country. The United States is rapidly becoming a multiracial, multicultural society in a way that it has not been before. Immigration from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean has populated the landscape with an array of yellow, brown, and black faces. Mine is one of them—I came to this country from India in 1978. When the United States starts to lose its predominantly white stamp, what impact will that have on its Western cultural traditions? On what terms will the evanescent majority

and the emerging minorities relate to each other? How should society cope with the agendas not only of ethnic minorities but also of women and homosexuals? These challenges are currently being faced by the leadership of institutions of higher education. Universities are more than a reflection or mirror of society; they are a leading indicator and catalyst for change.

A second, related reason to examine the changes is to discover what young people are learning these days, and the likely consequences for their future and that of the country. Numerous books, studies, and surveys have documented the alarming scientific and cultural illiteracy of American students. Parents, alumni, and civic leaders are justifiably anxious. Will the new policies in academia improve or damage the prospects for American political and economic competitiveness in the world? Will they enrich or debase the minds and souls of students? Will they enhance or diminish the prospects for harmony among different groups? Will they make the United States an easier or more difficult place to govern wisely?

In a forthcoming book I examine various facets of life and learning on campus, with examples from more than a hundred universities and detailed case studies at six: the University of California at Berkeley, Stanford, Howard, the University of Michigan, Duke, and Harvard. Here, by way of illustration, I describe some aspects of the situation at one of these institutions, where radical academic theories and radical politics have proved naturally complementary.



II: THE CASE OF DUKE UNIVERSITY



IN AN EFFORT TO PLACE ITSELF AT THE NATION'S academic forefront, Duke University, in Durham, North Carolina, made two controversial decisions in the mid- to late 1980s. First, starting in 1984, the prestigious school decided to recruit professors who would make Duke a frontier for a "new scholarship" in the humanities. These fashionable scholars go by a variety of names—deconstructionists, postmodernists, structuralists, poststructuralists, reader-response theorists—but they are embarked on a shared enterprise: exposing what they say is a façade of objectivity and critical detachment in such fields as law, history, and literature. As we will see, this new breed of scholars in the humanities tends to denigrate the idea that a text has any inherent meaning; on the contrary, it asserts that all interpretations are valid. Anything goes. "There is no knowledge, no standard, no choice that is objective," says Barbara Herrnstein Smith, a former president of the Modern Language Association who now teaches English at Duke. "Even Homer is a product of a specific culture, and it is possible to imagine cultures in which Homer would not be very interesting."

Duke's second major policy decision was to bolster its preferential recruitment program for black faculty. In 1988 the university announced a new affirmative-action policy requiring every department and program to hire at least one additional black by 1993. Departments that failed to do so would have to demonstrate that they had explored every avenue without success or they would face administrative penalties. Faculty and administrators at Duke argued that the usual inducements had not materially changed the ethnic composition of the faculty, which remained overwhelmingly white, and that something close to a quota program was needed.

These two ambitious hiring programs may seem unrelated, but in fact they have an underlying unity, in that they present a powerful challenge to the notion of standards of merit, both in course content and in faculty eligibility. Because the old notion of neutral standards in scholarship corresponded with a white male faculty regime at American universities, minority and feminist scholars have grown increasingly attached to the new scholarship, which promises to dismantle and subvert



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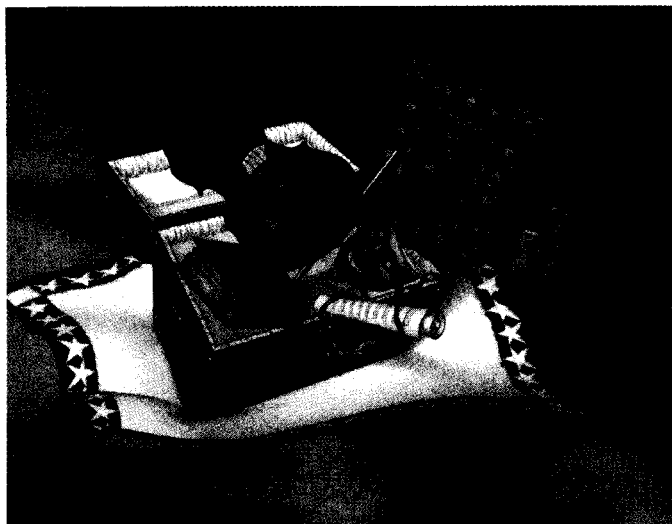
Great Falls, Mont.
March 21 • 24

Briefly each year Great Falls becomes the "western art capital of the world," drawing some 10,000 people to its auction of original art. Work by some of the nation's finest contemporary and historical western artists—this year including Russell, Oleg Stavrowsky, and Howard Terpning, who will also be the guest lecturer—goes under the gavel. There are also seminars, Indian-dance performances, and a birthday party in honor of ol' cowboy artist Charlie Russell himself. Many events are free; tickets to the auction cost \$75 and include admission to three receptions and a chuckwagon brunch. The auction benefits the C. M. Russell Museum, where works by Russell (1864–1926) and his contemporaries are exhibited. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday year-round. For more information or tickets: The Great Falls Advertising Federation, Box 634, Great Falls, MT 59403; (406) 761-6453, or (406) 452-8800 (evenings and weekends).

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS NEW ORLEANS LITERARY FESTIVAL

New Orleans, La.
March 22 • 24

Although Tennessee Williams moved away from New Orleans many times in his life, he referred to the city as his spiritual home and wrote several of his major works here. This annual festival features lectures, readings, panel discussions, plays, a jazz tribute, a one-act-play contest, and literary walking tours of Williams's French Quarter haunts. Guests this



year will include Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson. Most festival events will be held at Le Petit Théâtre (as will pre-festival performances of *The Glass Menagerie*, March 1 to 17). Admission to many events is free, and tickets to most others cost no more than \$12.50. For more information or tickets: The Tennessee Williams New Orleans Literary Festival, 5500 Prytania Street, Suite 217, New Orleans, LA 70115; (504) 522-2081.

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Washington, D.C.
April 20

Generally, access to the Folger Shakespeare Library—which houses the world's largest collection of first editions—is restricted to scholars, nearly 1,000 of whom turn up from around the world each year. But on the bard's birthday, the public is invited to an open house and tours of the Elizabethan Reading Room, free of charge. Children, especially, are courted, with activities to their taste. The hours for the open house are noon to 5 P.M. And on April 23 *King Lear* will pre-

view at the Shakespeare Theatre. The library also offers concerts, exhibitions, films, lectures, seminars, and poetry and prose readings. For more information on the open house or other events: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 East Capitol Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003; (202) 544-7077.

FIESTA DE LA RIBA

St. Petersburg, Fla.
May 11

St. Petersburg was hardly chosen at random as the site for the Salvador Dali Museum; its beautiful coastal setting is similar to the coast of Dali's Catalan homeland, his favorite landscape. The museum possesses the country's largest collection of Dali's work. Each year on his birthday it throws a fiesta, with Spanish food, music, dancing, magicians, jugglers, and piñatas. Everything is free. The Salvador Dali Museum is open year-round Tuesday through Sunday. Fiesta de la Riba is part of a three-week-long celebration of the arts in St. Petersburg. For more information: The Salvador Dali Museum, 1000 Third Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; (813) 823-3767.

JIMMIE RODGERS MEMORIAL FESTIVAL

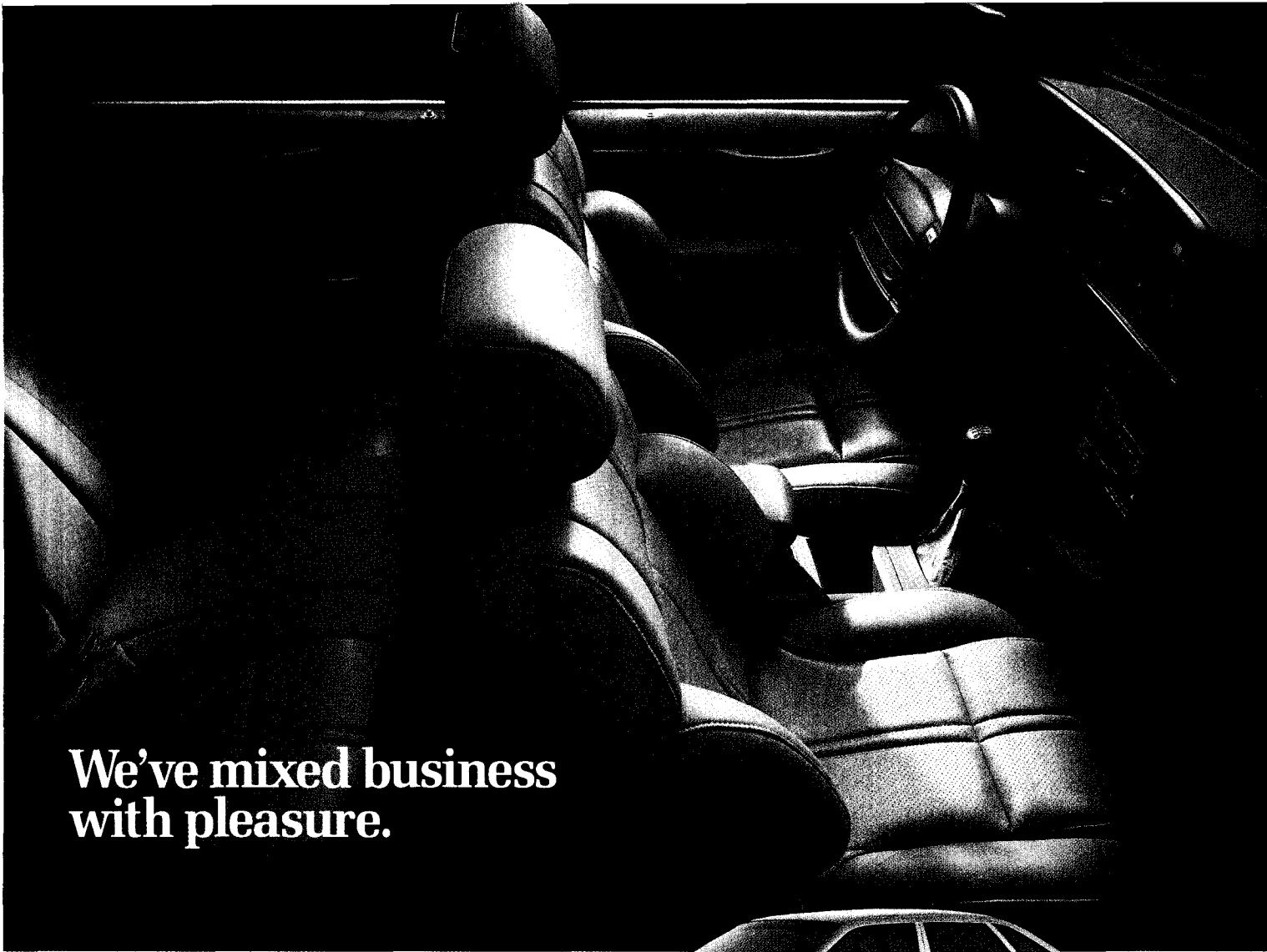
Meridian, Miss.
May 25 • June 2

Some 50,000 country-music fans descend annually upon Meridian to honor Jimmie Rodgers, "the father of country music." The festival features a who's-who country lineup. Other highlights will include a celebrity golf tournament and an air show presented by the Navy's Blue Angels. General-admission tickets range in price from \$6 to \$10. For more information or tickets: Jimmie Rodgers Foundation, Drawer 2170, Meridian, MS 39301; (601) 483-5763.

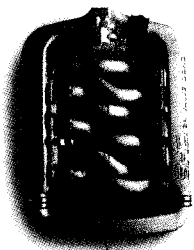
PEARL S. BUCK CELEBRATION

Perkasie, Pa.
June 2

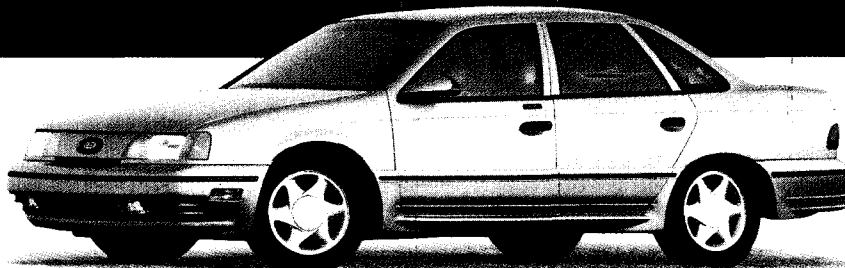
Next year is the centennial of the author's birth. Every year the Pearl S. Buck House, where the author lived for some 35 years, commemorates Buck's works; David and Julie Nixon Eisenhower host the celebration. There will be a dramatic reading of the recently republished *Peony*, followed by a champagne reception. The grounds, which will be open for tours, include a 60-acre farm, Buck's grave, and her 1835 stone farmhouse, which holds a collection of Asian and American antiques and the desk at which she wrote her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Good Earth*. Tickets cost \$25 and \$50. Proceeds from the event will go to a foundation, established by Buck, that sponsors Amerasian children. A year-long celebration of the centennial will kick off in October. For more information: Pearl S. Buck Foundation, Perkasie, PA 18944; (800) 242-2825 or (215) 249-0100.



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these old authoritative systems. They view the new scholarship both as a mechanism to change the structure and content of what is taught in the classroom and as a source of jobs and promotions. Not coincidentally, the new scholarship also offers a comprehensive critique of those institutions and procedures of liberal society—democracy, free markets, due process—that seem to limit the expansion of an egalitarian franchise. Critics would charge that Duke was abandoning standards altogether, but this was not the case: it was merely instituting a new set of criteria by which the competence to teach and the teaching method would be judged.

A number of universities have followed the same path as Duke in one way or another. In 1988 the University of Wisconsin announced plans to hire seventy minority professors before the end of 1991. Williams College has set 20 percent quotas for minority faculty, to be filled by the early 1990s. Purdue University has promised that the first five departments that find and hire a minority-group member will receive funds for an additional faculty position. By design, half the appointments at Hampshire College, in Massachusetts, during the past few years have gone to members of minorities. Virtually all universities are in intense and open competition to lure black, Hispanic, and Native American professors to campus. As for the new scholarship, Carnegie Mellon seeks to establish “the nation’s first poststructuralist undergraduate curriculum.” Brown University has an undergraduate semiotics program, and Indiana University has a Semiotics Center for graduate study. The State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of California at Irvine, and Johns Hopkins University are all striving for recognition in the new scholarship’s fashionable and esoteric fields.

The critical assumptions that underlie the new thinking are now finding their way into textbooks and the guiding presuppositions of scholarly organizations. In the prospectus for a standard textbook on literary history, Sacvan Berkovitch, a professor at Harvard, writes, “Individualism, self-reliance, and liberal democracy are no more or less absolute, nor more or less true to the laws of nature and the mind, than the once-eternal truths of providence, hierarchy and the divine right of kings.” The American Council of Learned Societies, in a recent document titled *Speaking for the Humanities*, maintains that democracy cannot be justified as a system of government inherently superior to totalitarianism; it is simply an “ideological commitment” that the West has chosen to make. At a Modern Language Association meeting in December of 1989, similar sentiments were everywhere expressed, including at sessions on “Is There a Brechtian Semiology?,” “Feminist Intertextuality: Rewriting as Resistance,” “Literary and Critical Theory From Lesbian Perspectives,” and (in a panel chaired by a Duke professor) “The Muse of Masturbation.”

Duke University seeks to establish itself as a leader in the new thinking. “We’re hot now and everyone knows

that,” Frank Lentricchia, a professor of English there, told *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. “I don’t think any other English department in the country can boast of the lineup of home-run hitters that we’ve now got here.” Barbara Herrnstein Smith says, “We are the mainstream—what we are doing here is what most of the best colleges do, or aspire to do.”

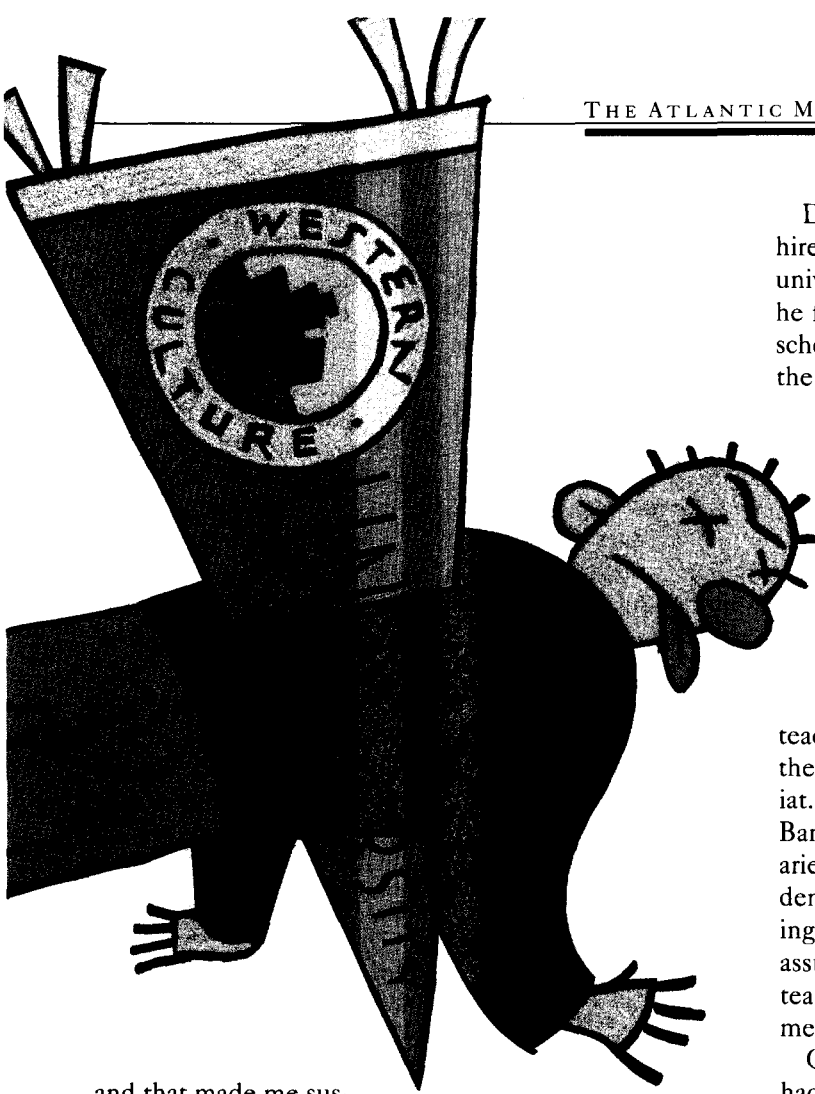
Will this momentum be sustained, at Duke and elsewhere? And if so, what impact will it have on the idea of a university, on the nature of discourse, on students? The Duke experiment is being watched across the country. And because the experiment has been in progress for some years now, it is not too early to assess the results of the university’s efforts to set new standards for hiring, scholarship, and teaching on the American campus.

The Superstars

BIG CHANGES ON campus often come about without conscious planning. In 1985 the president of Duke, Terry Sanford, left in order to pursue political ambitions. (He is now the junior senator from North Carolina.) Other senior administrators, such as the dean, stepped down around the same time. “The university administration basically turned over,” said Stanley Fish, who is currently the chairman of Duke’s English department, when I spoke with him one day during a visit to the Duke campus. The new hirings, he said, began shortly before Sanford’s departure, with the department’s recruitment of Frank Lentricchia. Fish speculated that it was Lentricchia’s master’s and Ph.D. degrees from Duke that clinched the decision to hire him away from Rice University. “I don’t think his former teachers realized that Frank’s interests had changed so dramatically in the intervening years. It was all very serendipitous.”

Administrators at Duke were happy to court Lentricchia, who had developed something of a flamboyant reputation in literary circles. *The Village Voice Literary Supplement* has described him as a leading practitioner of postmodernist criticism, and called him “the Dirty Harry of contemporary critical theory.” Lentricchia builds his scholarship on his ethnic identity. “I grew up knowing that I was not like somebody else. . . . that I was not an American,” he told the Duke University alumni magazine. Yet Lentricchia found that he could not develop unqualified enthusiasm for his ethnicity. “I . . . saw in the early sixties the beginning of the civil-rights movement down here. I witnessed marches, I heard the ugliest things said to other human beings that I had ever heard,





and that made me suspect my Italian background. When I saw the racist thing, it also made me see that cultural unity is purchased sometimes on the basis of exclusion and destruction and domination of other human beings. That made me not want to be a great rooter for Italian-American ethnicity."

"Nothing that passes through a human mind doesn't have its origin in sexual, economic, and racial differentiae," Lentricchia has said. And: "I come to the text with specific hangups, obsessions, worries, and I remake the text, in a sense, for me, for my times." A text, he maintains, "is a dead entity up until the point that a human mind interacts with it. If the human mind does not interact with it, Shakespeare is dead and gone forever. . . . The moment you start talking about it, you have injected an interpretation. The text is not speaking; you are speaking for the text. You activate the text." Lentricchia has publicized such ideas in *Criticism and Social Change* (1983), *Ariel and the Police* (1988), and other books.

At Duke, Lentricchia assumed the editorship of the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, which is published by Duke University Press. One of the oldest literary quarterlies in America, the magazine was founded by John Spencer Bassett, who wrote powerful and controversial essays attacking racial intolerance. In addition to continuing the magazine's traditional emphasis on racial questions, Lentricchia asserted that he wished to publish articles on Third World literary criticism, homosexuality, and Japanese culture.

During the search and interview process before he was hired, Lentricchia made valuable contacts with senior university administrators, and after he joined the faculty, he formulated a plan to transform the humanities at the school and gradually sold those people on it. Drawing on the fruits of a recent \$200 million university endowment campaign, Duke made offers, in some cases up to \$100,000 a year, to designated "academic superstars." In 1985 Stanley Fish was recruited from Johns Hopkins and the next year appointed chairman of the English department. His wife, Jane Tompkins, a feminist scholar, was also offered a position. Around the same time Duke hired Fredric Jameson, a leading Marxist scholar, and his wife, Susan Willis. The university subsequently recruited Annabel Patterson, who teaches great books "from below," which is to say, from the perspective of minorities, feminists, and the proletariat. More recently Duke hired the feminist theoretician Barbara Herrnstein Smith. In effect Fish, by offering salaries that couldn't be refused, converted fashionable academics into free agents. "It's analogous to what's happening in the NBA," Fish says. "You no longer have the firm assumption that a star will play his whole career with one team." In academic circles Duke's humanities departments are known today as the Fish tank.

Oddly, the university's administration seems to have had little idea of the nature of its acquisitions, even as its humanities departments were transformed. "They wanted excitement," Fish says. "The guys who brought us here knew little about us personally." The dean of arts and sciences at the time, Richard White, is a botanist by specialty. "His field of expertise is ferns," Fish says. "He had to be told what Third World studies is, what feminism is. But he's learned. Now he teaches seminars in feminism and botany. Did you know that? He really does." Similarly, Phillip Griffiths, the provost, was a mathematician. "He had no position whatsoever on literary criticism," Fish says. "Now he's one of our major backers."

Administrators confirm Fish's account. "Look," says Malcolm Gillis, the dean of the graduate school and viceprovost for academic affairs at Duke. "These fellows are cutting-edge. Whatever they're doing, they get attention. Our objective is to stimulate debate."

The Duke classroom today is a changed place. A Duke catalogue from 1960-1961 describes English-department courses on composition, persuasive speaking and argumentation, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, the English novel, modern European drama, and American literature from 1800 to 1920. Now Frank Lentricchia teaches a course titled "Paranoia, Politics and Other Pleasures," which surveys such material as Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, Mario Puzo's *Godfather*, and Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* movies. One of the insights of the course is that organized crime is "a metaphor for American busi-

ness as usual." For Annabel Patterson, Shakespeare's plays are a mechanism to illuminate how seventeenth-century society mistreated women, the working class, and minorities. Janice Radway, a professor of literature, aims her courses at changing the distribution of power in certain cultural practices. We ought, she has said, "to insist repeatedly on the status of cultural studies as . . . explicitly interventionist." Eve Sedgwick, a professor of English, dedicates her courses to exposing the heterosexual bias inherent in Western literature, an endeavor that she pursues in her book *Epistemology of the Closet* and in papers such as "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl" and "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay." This fall Sedgwick plans to introduce a new course on lesbian literary traditions.

Of Quotas and Competence

DUKE'S DECISION TO ESTABLISH MINORITY FACULTY hiring quotas came about not as the result of cajoling by Frank Lentricchia or Stanley Fish but partly in response to orchestrated protests by student and faculty activists. The Duke administration had been concerned about how few minority professors the school had—only thirty-one blacks in the entire university, out of a faculty of 1,399, with thirty-five out of fifty-six "hiring units" at Duke composed wholly of whites. (The low proportion of minorities, 2.2 percent, does need to be placed in historical context: Duke started admitting black students only in the early 1960s; the first black faculty member, Samuel DuBois Cook, came to the political-science department in 1966.) Like other universities, Duke had an affirmative-action program to seek out and attract minority faculty members, and its failure to hire very many was due in part to the shortage of black Ph.D.s that has caused universities all over the country to "raid" one another's black faculty. Nevertheless, a group called the Committee on Black Faculty, established by Duke's president, H. Keith H. Brodie (Terry Sanford's successor), was dissatisfied with the progress on hiring.

"It became clear to us that something stronger and more effective needed to be done," Erdman Palmore, a professor of medical sociology and the chairman of the committee, was quoted as saying in the *Greensboro News & Record*. Joseph Di Bona, a professor of education, went further, saying that without more black faculty members, existing minorities at Duke would lead "disembodied lives." He added, "Structurally this institution is a racist institution. The way to overcome it is to make a determined effort to understand it, and then do something about it."

In the winter and spring of 1988 minority students were mobilized by a series of rousing speakers who visited the campus in connection with Black History Month and Student Activism Week. The black feminist Maya

Angelou criticized society's "implied statement that we can only use a certain number of blacks at a time." The civil-rights activist Julian Bond and the former student leader Abbie Hoffman also spoke, chastising students for their apathy and urging them to recover the protest fervor of previous decades.

In consultation with student groups, members of the Committee on Black Faculty developed the resolution that would require every department at Duke to hire at least one black professor by 1993. "We wanted to come up with a resolution that no one could easily evade," Palmore (who is white) says. "We basically copied the contents of a court order handed down to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill." What Chapel Hill was being forced to do, Duke would voluntarily impose on itself. However, support for the new policy was not expected to be universal. "We knew that this sort of program would carry a stigma in some people's eyes," Palmore says. "We tried fooling around with the name. We used to call it 'the add-on policy,' but that didn't sound so good. Now we call it 'the opportunity appointments.'" In March of 1988 Duke's academic council, a representative faculty group that rules on hiring and curricular matters, subject to the administration's approval, debated the resolution. The chairman, Philip Stewart, a professor of Romance languages, agreed to a proposed amendment that softened its language, requiring departments to establish not quotas but "incentives" for minority recruitment. Stewart told the campus daily that the amendment enjoyed the support of an "overwhelming majority" of council members.

Although Palmore says he was satisfied by the "good faith" reflected in the amended resolution, members of the Committee on Black Faculty decided to resign en masse to generate media attention and thereby reopen the issue. Palmore says that he was reluctant to go along, because the tactic seemed to subvert democratic procedure, but that finally he agreed. "I told the other members that if it would help their cause, I too would resign." In April all seven members of the committee resigned, igniting a new activism among campus minority groups.

PRESIDENT BRODIE, A PSYCHIATRIST WHO IS SYMPATHETIC to minority activism, defended the modified resolution of the academic council, on the ground that it did not make sense to establish requirements that the school might be unable to meet, owing to the small size of the pool of potential new black faculty members. Under threat of sanctions, he said, a department might be moved to hire unqualified applicants who "may not be motivated to carry out the research activity that would be required for a tenure appointment." Thus, Brodie said, "at the end of the day we would have benefited from their presence and then run into the awkward situation of not granting them tenure." By encouraging cynicism, a compulsory hiring program could be self-defeating.

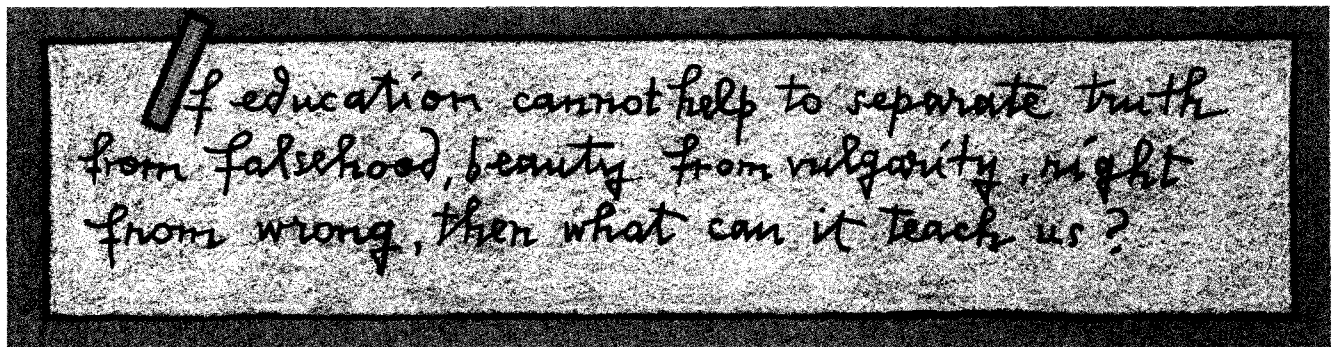
"We do no one any favors by lowering our standards," he concluded.

These statements led the religion professor Melvin Peters, a member of the Committee on Black Faculty, to denounce Brodie. "It's visceral and unwitting racism," he said. Student groups also expressed outrage. According to news reports, Mark Lasser, a junior, threatened to organize a protest that would invite the national media to witness the dressing up of the statue of James B. Duke, the university's founder, in the center of the west campus, in a Ku Klux Klan outfit. Students began to collect signatures on a petition demanding that the academic council reconsider the compulsory-hiring proposal; some 2,500 students signed it. Other signatories included William Griffith, Duke's vice-president for student affairs, and Wilbur Gulley, the mayor of Durham. Under considerable pressure, the academic council agreed to discuss the matter again.

Not everyone was happy about this new turn of events. Several white students complained that Duke was succumbing to pressure from minority groups.

you have failed. Some obviously don't want to do that." Theodore Slotkin, a professor of pharmacology, said, "Whether we achieve the goal is a separate issue. Without the goad of being required to do so, we will fall short."

Several days before the academic council's second debate on the issue, minority groups at Duke organized a rally of about 300 students on the main quad. "We want more black faculty," Marshall Roderick declared. "We're not asking for it. We're demanding it." Karim Deane, a student activist, said, "The only time a lot of students here have contact with a black person is when they go get something to eat or by having a class with one. . . . In the United States a black is forced to live the white culture to survive, but a white does not have to learn ours. Black faculty can change that." Appearing at the rally, President Brodie found himself facing angry students. He apologized for his earlier remarks about the risk of lower standards, which he said were taken out of context. "They sound foolish, which they were," he said. Reversing himself, Brodie agreed to sign the petition demand-



Speeches organized by the Student Action Cooperative were occasionally booed. More-articulate resistance came from two respected black scholars at Duke—a chemistry professor, Bert Fraser-Reid, and a psychiatry professor, Jacquelyne Johnson Jackson, who warned that quotas would ultimately prove demoralizing to minority faculty members hired under such a regime, and would stigmatize all minority faculty members. A black undergraduate, Ben Rogers, argued that there were some departments where black faculty could not plausibly be said to enrich learning. He said that he would feel better if a professor teaching him Chinese had a Chinese background. "Having a black professor in this class would not give me much confidence." Thomas Rowe, a law professor, argued that compulsory hiring was undesirable because "making promises you don't have good reason to think you can keep is a bad way to show commitment to anything."

Marshall Roderick, a philosophy professor and a member of the Committee on Black Faculty, responded that the proposed requirement "cannot be equated with quotas." He said, "Quotas have consequences if you fail. The only consequence here is that you have to show why

ing that the academic council reconsider the minority-hiring proposal.

By all accounts, Brodie's signature on the petition broke down the resistance of the academic council. Promptly thereafter, a number of Duke professors switched their votes. The final tally was 35–19 in favor of mandatory minority hiring. The decision also provided for new funding for fellowships to enable members of minorities to attend graduate schools. President Brodie said, "The time had come for us to take a stand. . . . I support this resolution because it sends the right signal." In other words, neither Duke nor Brodie could now be accused of racism.

A Lot of Sparks

"THERE IS NO COMPROMISING OF ACADEMIC standards here," Malcolm Gillis, the stocky, cheerful vice-provost at Duke, told me, adjusting his wide tie. "I wouldn't stand for it." An economist by profession, Gillis maintained that it was possible to encourage the new diversity without a loss of quality.

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Gillis said he didn't understand why Stanley Fish, Frank Lentricchia, and the new team in the humanities departments generated so much controversy. "As I understand it, what they are saying is that objectivity is impossible, that knowledge is relative to historical and cultural conditions." Gillis permitted himself a wink. "Hey, I thought everybody knew that. But seriously, what I do know is that these fellows generate a lot of sparks. Do you know that applications for our graduate program are up three hundred and forty percent in the last five years? These students are so good that before these people came here, we would have been happy to take the bottom quintile of these applicants. The bottom quintile."

More than 25 percent of doctorates from American universities now go to foreign students, Gillis observed. He asked, "Where are we going to get faculty in this country over the next twenty years? We simply have to tap into pools previously unused. That means minorities. That means women."

Offering an economist's rationale, Gillis said that Duke's motivation for minority hiring quotas was self-interest: Duke was looking out for itself in its attempt to diversify. "That guilt stuff doesn't work on me. It's been tried, but they've given up. It doesn't work." He was not apologetic about wooing black faculty from other colleges. "Let the other universities worry about themselves," he said. "We're unorthodox, because we're concerned with results."

Gillis argued that Duke has a responsibility to North Carolina, whose population is 20 to 25 percent black. "We cannot ignore our constituencies," he said. Yet he criticized other colleges that attempt to appease minority activists by suppressing free discussion. "As long as I'm here, there will be no fetters on the free exchange of ideas. What the hell is a university all about if not open debate? That's just a given. It should be expected, even invited."

Gillis also said that minority members hired at Duke would have to meet the university's current academic requirements for promotion and tenure. "Some colleges are exempting minority faculty from the promotion- and tenure-review process. You won't see us doing that here." Although he acknowledged that departments might feel pressured to hire substandard faculty members under the new rules, Gillis said he was confident that Duke could resist such temptations. "It's tough, but we're determined to succeed. Our reputation depends on it."

The Numbers Problem

THE PROJECT TO HIRE MORE BLACK FACULTY members at Duke and other colleges faces a serious obstacle: an extremely small number of Ph.D. degrees are awarded to blacks each year, and the rate at which blacks get postgraduate degrees is not rising, according to statistics published annu-

ally by the federal government. Moreover, about half the total number of doctorates awarded to blacks in recent years are in a single field: education. Openings in academic departments generally call for people who have specific fields of expertise: thus an English department may require a Shakespearean scholar, or a physics department a nuclear theorist. Young black scholars must be matched with the particular vacancies in American universities, even under affirmative-action programs. In many fields, however, there is a dearth of blacks with doctorates. Of 32,278 doctorates awarded in 1987, American blacks earned only 765. That year new black Ph.D.s in basic fields included one in computer science, one in astronomy, three in chemical engineering, fourteen in economics, three in international relations, nine in anthropology, one in comparative literature, two in philosophy, four in religion, eleven in American literature. Recently published data for 1988 show that there were no new black Ph.D.s in the United States in the fields of astronomy, demography, geography, European history, classics, or comparative literature, or in German, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, or Arabic literature. These numbers are especially striking in view of the fact that there are about 3,500 four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

It should come as no surprise, given the low number of black Ph.D.s, that the American Council on Education has reported that blacks make up only 4.1 percent of full-time faculty members. Further, a large percentage of such faculty members are concentrated in historically black institutions such as Howard and Spelman.

Why do so few blacks seem to be going on to graduate school and embarking on an academic career? The simple answer is that it usually makes little economic sense for them to do so. With so many companies eager to pay good salaries to bright young black college graduates, few blacks have an incentive to postpone earnings further to go on to graduate school. Moreover, the few blacks who earn advanced degrees in such fields as computer science and engineering find lucrative positions waiting for them in the private sector. In each of the first five years after earning a doctorate, blacks who joined college faculties earned an average of \$30,000, as opposed to \$37,000 for blacks with doctorates who chose to pursue other career tracks.

The frustration of those who seek to expand minority faculty hiring in universities is heightened by the knowledge that more than a third of American professors will retire over the next fifteen years. College officials predict shortages in the humanities and social sciences. And so college departments will see a large number of vacancies open to minority scholars. Unless the number of black Ph.D.s dramatically increases, however, it will be difficult for blacks to fill even the positions vacated by retiring minority members.

Affirmative action in faculty hiring has thus led to fren-

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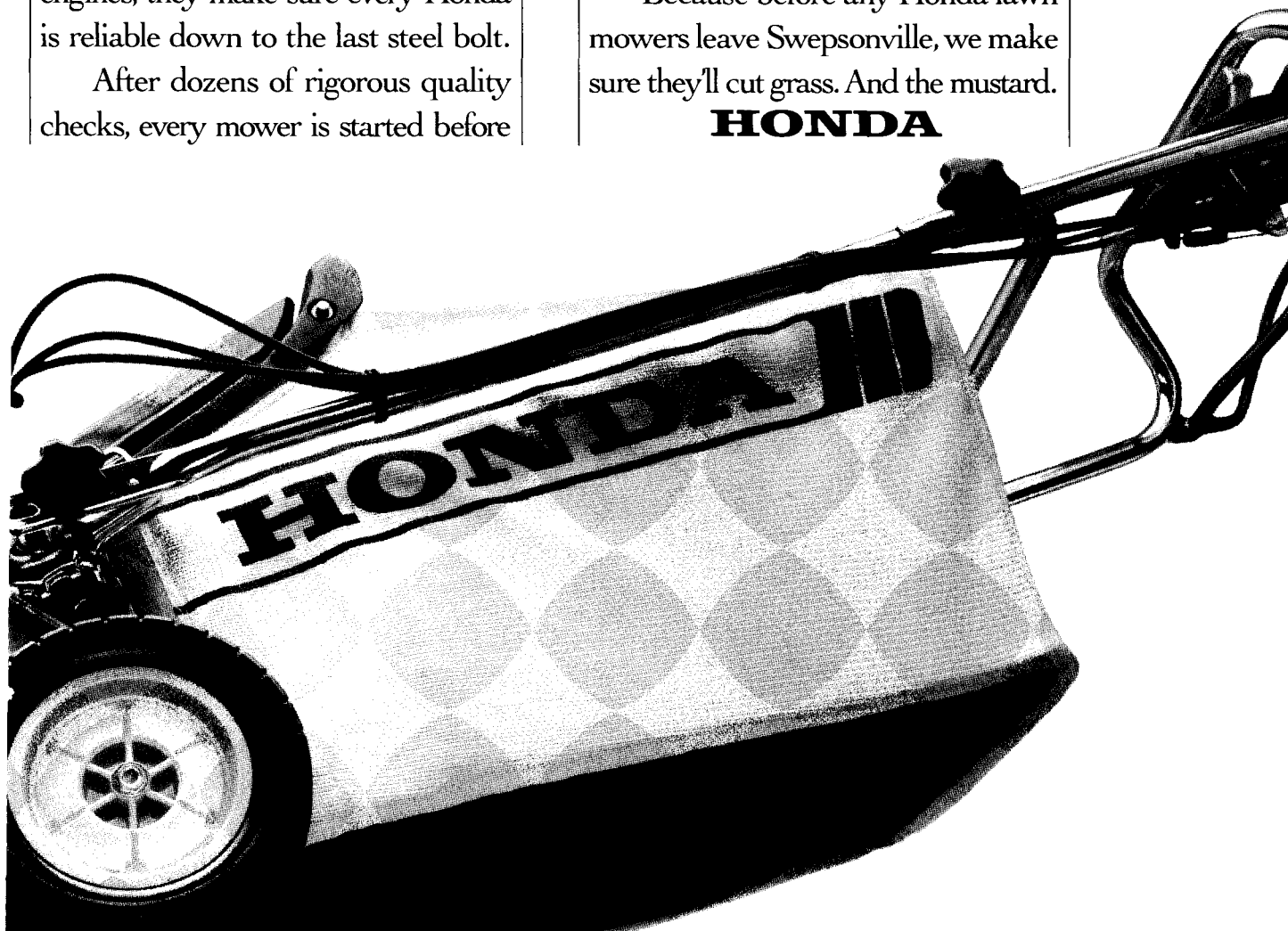
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HONDA



zied competition for the tiny group of new black Ph.D.s, combined with a great deal of financially motivated hopping by black professors from one place to another—a practice that allows colleges to count the same minority faculty member more than once. This so-called “black market,” which Duke joined as soon as its quota program went into effect, has a variety of controversial consequences.

FIRST, MORE COLLEGES ARE BUYING OFF MINORITY professors from predominantly black schools, offering them money and benefits that Howard and Fisk and Tougaloo cannot possibly match. “We’re experiencing difficulty in hiring qualified Afro-American faculty,” Wendy Winters, the dean of liberal arts at Howard, told *The New York Times*. “We’re faced with being raided. Some schools are extremely aggressive in pursuing Afro-American scholars.”

Second, universities are looking to foreign academics, a practice that has drawn fire from some minority groups. When Williams College tried to put faculty members

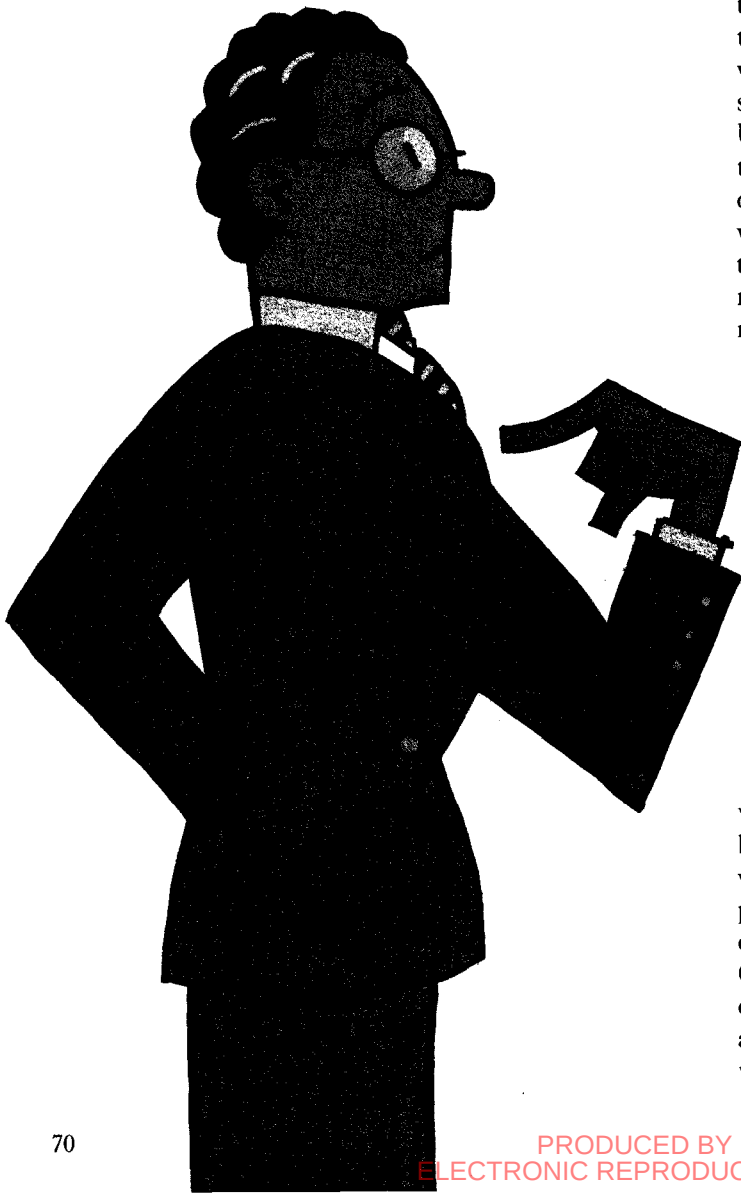
who were Spanish under the “Hispanic” rubric, minority activists challenged the move, arguing, as one put it, that “what the college considers ‘Hispanic’ are really white Europeans who don’t have a clue what it’s like to be Chicano or Puerto Rican.”

Third, universities have followed unusual practices such as minority-only scholarships for Ph.D. candidates, quietly stopping hiring searches as soon as a black applicant turns up, and accepting minority members even when no particular faculty vacancy exists and when the applicant’s field of specialty doesn’t correspond with departmental needs.

Bucknell University recently funded positions for five new black faculty members, to be hired in whatever fields they could be found. The University of Iowa hired seven black professors, even though none of them filled a specific opening in a specific department. Miami University increased the number of its black faculty members from seven to thirty-two under a recruitment program that ends the department’s search as soon as an appropriate minority candidate is found. In 1984 the provost of San Francisco State University approved two new positions for the English department, “but with the stipulation that the candidates recommended to me be non-white.” He went on: “Let me underscore that the stipulation is an absolute condition.” Ohio Wesleyan University placed an ad seeking “black applicants for a tenure-track position.” In September of 1989 the director of a Wayne State University faculty-search committee wrote a memorandum to colleagues insisting that new positions “*must* be filled by a minority person.” Colleges have run into the problem of bidding up the salaries of minority members so high that even with fewer academic credentials they are often paid considerably more than their white counterparts in the same department.

“As the Old Guard Retires . . .”

OF THE HANDFUL OF MINORITY PROFESSORS that Duke can already include in the statistics for its black-hiring program, undoubtedly the best known is Henry Louis Gates, Jr., a prodigious scholar of literature who was wooed away from Cornell University, partly by Duke’s willingness to offer a job to Gates’s wife, who is a ceramist. Gates, who did undergraduate work at Yale and graduate work at Cambridge, was approached by Duke as early as 1986—“before the black-faculty hiring initiative,” he carefully pointed out when we met. Nevertheless, Gates conceded that his person would be counted toward the minority quota, because he did not accept the appointment until 1989. Gates said that, in a way, the hiring quota made the idea of coming to Duke more attractive. “I felt I wouldn’t be alone. There was a time, you see, when black scholars wanted to be the only one on the block, what Du Bois



used to call the 'Talented Tenth.' But today most black scholars want company. Partly it's just social. We want our children to be socialized not just as upper-middle-class but also as black."

Gates maintained that the notion of America as a melting pot applied only to European immigrants. "White ethnic groups came here and they all became white. Previously they didn't think of themselves that way—they were Latvians or Czechs or Germans. But here they were all just white folk. Of course, that option was never open to blacks and Hispanics and other Third World immigrants." Consequently, Gates said, people of color seek not a melting but an affirmation of difference. "That's why most black scholars study something black—we have to study ourselves, to find out what makes us different, and what is most valuable about that experience." Gates's scholarship concentrates on attempts to define a distinctive black voice in African and American literature.

Breaking into a smile, Gates said, "We black scholars are enjoying our new marketability. Don't tell me about Cornell's loss and Duke's gain. I'm not going from Master Cornell to Master Duke, you know. I am free to make my own choices." Gates said that the intense bidding war for black professors among American universities was the "only way for society to become aware of the problem—to find out how few of us there really are."

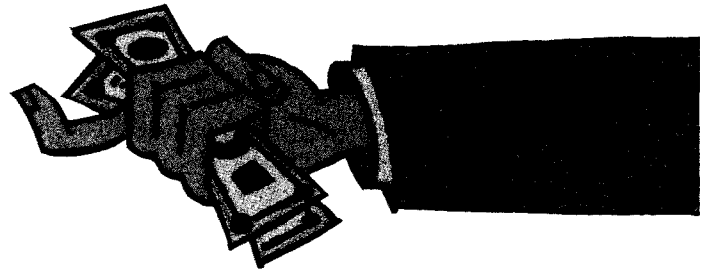
The reason for the shortage of black Ph.D.s, Gates said, is that "we don't have a long tradition of academic families." Yet, at the same time, "I don't think white people are trained to see black intelligence. The only way I've seen it happen is through affirmative action." If preferential treatment results in substandard appointments on occasion, Gates isn't concerned. "We have the right to have mediocre scholars, you know. Just like white people. It's racist to say that all blacks have to qualify for the Nobel prize to be hired by universities." Standards will rise over time, Gates predicted, as clusters of black academics, recruited by the most aggressive American universities, cultivate and train a new generation of black scholars.

Gates rejected, however, the contention that all academic standards are mere camouflage for white male privilege, which is what some of his colleagues in the Duke English department affirm. "I don't question the idea of standards," Gates said. "I only question how standards have been produced and applied." Gates differs from some of the more radical critics of the standard curriculum in that he does not want to throw out the idea of a canon, or agreed-upon list of worthwhile—perhaps even essential—books; rather, Gates believes it is important to develop an alternative, minority canon of works that can be taught alongside the classics of European culture. Toward this end he has edited the *Norton Anthology of Afro-American Literature*, which is intended as a standard textbook on black writers. "I'm a restorationist," Gates

said. "When I was in grad school, in the 1960s, everything black that could be found was reproduced. But some of it was terrible. We've got to make discriminations within the corpus of black literature, and keep that which is worth keeping. We have to allow ourselves to be co-opted, and to co-opt. Sure, this means joining the establishment, but what's wrong with that? We are needed to keep those guys honest."

"I'm much more conservative than my colleagues," Gates went on. "I do believe that some works are better than others. Some texts, black or white, use language that is more complex, more compelling, richer. I'm not in favor of Chinese-lantern literature—you know, paper-thin and full of hot air. I believe we can find works by blacks that are complex and reflect layers of experience otherwise scarce, otherwise ignored." He sighed. "My friends on the left think I'm hopeless." Fortunately, he said, they dare not attack him too ferociously. "You can't criticize black people too much or you'll be called a racist."

In order to develop an alternative canon, Gates said, it is essential for black scholars to work together with feminists. "We're allies. They need us. We need them." He credited women's studies with "paving the way for black studies." Further, white feminists have acclaimed black authors such as Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker, and created a new market for their work. "We need a bigger market than just blacks. That market is white women." Gates identified what he called "a rainbow coalition of blacks, leftists, feminists, deconstructionists, and Marxists" who have now infiltrated academia and are "ready to take control." It will not be much longer, he predicted. "As the old guard retires, we will be in charge."



"Then, of course, the universities will become more liberal politically."

Like some of his fellow scholar-advocates, Gates is willing to lend his academic prestige to some unusual political causes. At the recent obscenity trial of the rap group 2 Live Crew, in Florida, he helped to exonerate the group by testifying that its lyrics constitute a subtle form of "signifying," that the group upholds the tradition of Ralph Ellison and black literature in general, and that Shakespeare himself frequently used four-letter words. Yet Gates continues to respect the basic ideals of liberal education. The only question is whether "moderates"

like him can continue to consolidate their gains without losing control of the coalition they have helped to create and the forces they have helped to unleash.

Norms 'R' Us

SOME OF THE FLASHIEST COLORS IN THAT COALITION are sported by Stanley Fish. During an interview with me Fish wore a bold shirt and gold chain; he was deeply tanned, and his silver hair was brushed back from his forehead. In a photograph from several years ago that I saw, Fish was pale and pinstriped—the consummate urban academic. Fish seems to enjoy his new intellectual and social status. His office is at Duke's Law School, where he also holds an appointment. "I am not a lawyer," he explained, "but I am a law professor."

Fish repeatedly referred to the "in crew," the "path-breakers," the "superstars." He was contemptuous of Lynne Cheney, the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for committing what he called "the error of objectivism." Objectivists, Fish said, believe in enduring intellectual, cultural, and moral standards, not realizing that "history is the crucible in which standards emerge and become sociologically and politically established." Of course, Cheney and others maintain that truths can be enduring and objective, and yet apply differently in different situations. But Fish countered that the "traditional view" misses the crucial point that there are no distinctions between standard and application, between observer and subject matter. "The norms and standards to which our behavior conforms *are* us," Fish said. "They aren't a set of rules we consult."

Thus philosophers think they are discussing the "real world," Fish said, "but all they are addressing is questions related to philosophy." Outside the field "they have nothing to say to anyone." Similarly, Fish said, his own relativism is a literary position; it has no implications for the way he lives his life. "People like Cheney raise the specter that we don't have any standards," he said. "They worry that there will be young people walking around acting in a random, nihilistic way, or perpetually perplexed about life. But that doesn't follow from my position at all. I'm just saying that our standards are acquired through socialization. My critics assume a world in which persons are not socialized. Actually, it is impossible to live without standards. The only question is, where do standards come from, how are they realized, whose standards prevail?"

Fish was in a metaphysical frame of mind. "Belief and knowledge are considered to be two different things. But they are not," he said. Since all knowledge is historically and socially conditioned, "the best we can hope to do is convert someone from their set of beliefs to ours. This is persuasion. It has nothing to do with transcendent truth

or knowledge. It is an art, as the old rhetoricians knew. Fortunately, our belief structures contain, within themselves, the possibility of alteration, of adopting a new opinion. From what I am saying, it obviously follows that persuasion is contingent, probabilistic; it cannot hope for certainty."

STANLEY FISH ESTABLISHED HIS REPUTATION WITH the development of "reader-response criticism," which emphasized the predominance of the audience's critical reaction to the text over the intention of the author or a presumption of inherent meaning. In *Surprised by Sin* (1967), the book for which he is best known, he wrote ingeniously about a passage from Milton, showing that the circuitous prose, the use of double negative, and the manner of punctuation all conspire repeatedly to alter the reader's natural critical response in the process of reading. The final meaning of the passage is subordinate to this technique and method of reading, according to Fish. Indeed, Milton may even have wanted readers to misconstrue his elaborate phrases in *Paradise Lost*, Fish suggested, so that in stumbling from line to line, forming premature opinions and then having to revise them, we would be constantly reminded of our fallen state.

These contentions amazed many young literary critics with their cleverness and audacity. A few scholars raised the specter of interpretive nihilism, but Fish struck back, this time proclaiming the sovereignty of "interpretive communities" to establish a broad agreement over what texts mean, and thus ensure against utter interpretive chaos and idiocy. Of course, what these communities agree upon has no claim to truth or objectivity, being itself determined by historical circumstance.

To be sure, this approach, no less than Fish's earlier theory, does raise the prospect of radical subjectivity, but Fish maintains that the risk is outweighed by an exhilarating freedom—the freedom that comes from the unaccountable exercise of power. "Does might make right?" Fish asks in his latest book, *Doing What Comes Naturally*. "In a sense the answer I must give is yes, since in the absence of a perspective independent of interpretation some interpretive perspective will always rule by virtue of having won out over its competitors." Fish goes so far as to assert that "all preferences are principled."

Besides youthful literary iconoclasts, another group has been drawn to Fish's thinking. Although Fish does not consider himself a political partisan, "many people on the political left found my work psychologically liberating," he explained. "They began to say: once you realize that standards emerge historically, then you can see through and discard all the norms to which we have been falsely enslaved." In other words, relativism paves the way for a toppling of the old rules, and the establishment of new ones based on political strength.

Fish's feelings about subverting the old rules in criticism parallel his feelings about the old rules in campus

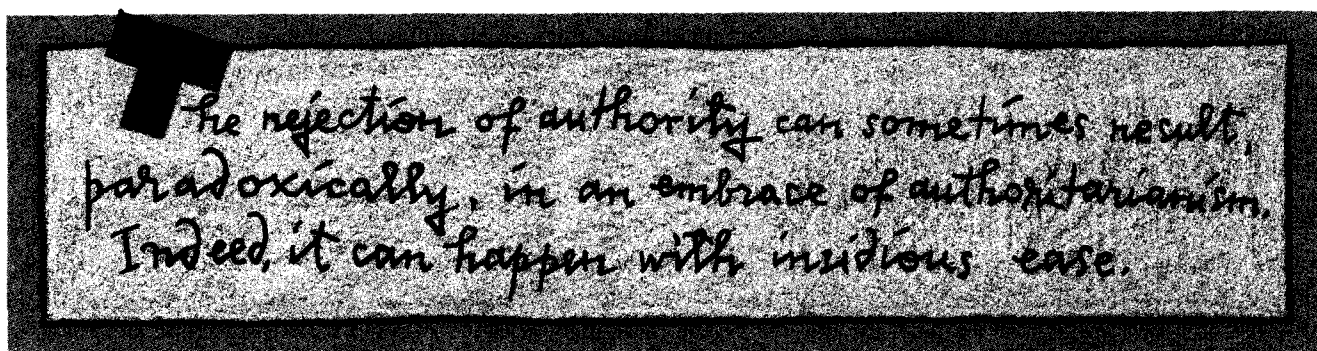
governance. He strongly supported the decision to mandate quotas for the hiring of minority faculty members. Duke will "in all likelihood" fail to meet its minority-hiring goals, Fish said, but "in the context of that moment, probably it was the right thing to do." Fish added, "Our *modus operandi* is not independent of the minority, affirmative-action consciousness." He said that the mandatory black-hiring plan is entirely congruent with the hiring of scholars such as Lentricchia, Tompkins, Herrnstein Smith, and himself. Both decisions, he argued, help to realize "our historicist, postmodernist, poststructuralist moment."

Fish went on to criticize those who had spoken up for basic qualifications. "They want a definition of quality that excludes considerations of race, sex, and so on," he said. "But once you have subtracted the accidents of class, race, gender, and political circumstance, what is it that you have left?" Merit is "a political viewpoint claiming for itself the mantle of objectivity," Fish said. "All educational decisions are political by their very nature."

If this is so, then why should even private universities

believed that, by and large, there is a collective literary judgment that works, over time, to confirm the greatness of particular works. If a work survives the scrutiny of serious minds over generations, it survives Johnson's test of the true classic; its reputation is protected from the charge of provinciality or faddishness. Thus its prestige acquires a timeless quality. In his *Preface to Shakespeare*, Johnson argued that Shakespeare had survived just such a test.

This view of literature has informed the work of most of the great critics, from William Hazlitt and Matthew Arnold to T. S. Eliot and Lionel Trilling. These critics were hardly narrow in their interpretive approaches; they did not restrict themselves either to a literal reading or to the stated intentions of the authors. They admitted the utility of external disciplines—history, sociology, psychology, philosophy—as tools to enrich the meaning of the text. Indeed, they often sought multiple meanings, believing that these could enhance the experience of reading. But this hardly means that these critics considered literary value to be totally subjective, or that texts can mean whatever we want them to. Rather, the reader was



be allowed to enjoy independence or academic freedom? Why not turn over the schools to the rough-and-tumble of politics, and let legislators make decisions about admissions, faculty, and curriculum? Fish grinned. "Sure, I might be in favor of that. *It depends*. That's what I'm always going to say. If universities do things that are horrible, such as conduct McCarthyite witch hunts, then I can envision situations where I'd like to see government intervention." In Fish's view, not even university autonomy is sacrosanct; it is one more arbitrary value, with no claim to special reverence. Far more important, he believes, are political exigencies, including the agenda of the minority activists on campus.

The End of Meaning?

TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN the classroom at Duke, it is necessary to understand several developments in humanities scholarship. Traditional literary criticism is perhaps best exemplified by Samuel Johnson, who brought a commonsensical intelligence to bear upon his interpretations of novels, plays, and poems. Johnson be-

viewed as secondary, or subordinate, to the text; his function was to illuminate the work, not to supplant it.

Much of modern literary criticism is based on the very different premise that poems and novels do not mean anything in particular; they do not correspond to any specific "reality," either material or metaphysical. Terry Eagleton, the author of a widely used textbook on literary theory, has written that modern interpretation rejects "the commonsensical person-on-the-street belief that objects existed independently of ourselves in the external world, and that our information about them was generally reliable." The genesis of this approach is probably Austin Warren and René Wellek's influential book *A Theory of Literature* (1949), which maintained that the definition of literature was problematic, and posited circumstances under which Shakespeare might be displaced by the Manhattan phone book or by graffiti.

TODAY THERE ARE NUMEROUS SCHOOLS OF CRITICISM based on the denial of inherent textual meaning: formalism, hermeneutics, semiotics, structuralism, psychoanalytic criticism, Marxism, deconstructionism. Stanley Fish refuses to be identified with

any of these, but only in order to embrace all of them—which is not hard, because the various systems are symbiotic, drawing on many of the same sources and pursuing the common end of destroying traditional literary criticism, and indeed the literary text itself. At the risk of offending academic specialists, here is a brief résumé of the guiding presumptions of these critical schools.

Formalism traces itself to pre-revolutionary Russia. Led by Roman Jakobson, the Russian formalists argued that literature is a collection of verbal “forms” that do not necessarily correspond to any external feelings, intentions, or reality. Formalists dissected the words of texts, establishing linguistic patterns and oppositions, but all for their own sake, not to extract meaning of any sort. Sound, imagery, syntax, rhyme, and narrative technique assumed lives of their own; they were not read in relation to what the poem or novel actually said.

Linguistic, or hermeneutic, criticism assumes that words do not express or reflect realities. Hans-Georg Gadamer argued, in *Truth and Method* (1975), that all interpretation is situational: the text does not exist in and of itself but is utterly a creation of the culturally conditioned reader. Thus Gadamer maintained that literary meanings are not constant but change dramatically over time. According to this logic, *Hamlet* is not one play but many plays, possibly an infinite number, and to assert that it is about a young man seeking revenge for his father’s murder is to reveal oneself as narrow and parochial.

Semiotics and structuralism apply various linguistic models to analyze relationships within a work of literature. An example is Tzvetan Todorov’s 1969 analysis of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, in which Todorov, a critic of considerable stature, designated all the characters as “nouns” and their actions as “verbs,” and concluded that the work is nothing more than one long sentence, combining the nouns and verbs in different ways.

Psychoanalytic critics read literature as a product of the unconscious and subconscious life. In *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (1968), Norman Holland argues that plot, character, dialogue, and other conventional devices of literature are mechanisms for readers to transform their

deepest anxieties into socially acceptable meanings.

Marxist criticism subordinates the intrinsic meaning of what the author says to what it regards as truly important—the historically determined class divisions that reveal the characters as members of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. Marxist critics go on to explain what happens in the plot as a commentary on the historic struggle between these social classes. A sample of Marxist criticism is the acclaimed study *Prison Literature in America* (1989), by H. Bruce Franklin, a professor at Rutgers, in which the author writes, “Most of the nonwhites recognize that they are in prison not for what they have done as individuals but for what they are collectively,” adding that the prison system is “designed largely to replace the earlier form of Black chattel slavery.”

Finally there is deconstructionism. Led by Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man, deconstructionists hold that literature is simply empty of meaning. Whereas structuralists try to find linguistic parallels and contrasts in texts, deconstructionists labor to discover ingenious, and sometimes bizarre, contradictions that render a given work “radically incoherent.” Focusing on the distance between word and subject—“signifier” and “signified,” in deconstructionists’ terms—Derrida and De Man contend that literary reality is an illusion, that fact dissolves into fiction, that literal meaning cannot be divorced from metaphorical meaning.

There are disagreements among these various new schools of criticism, but they are united in a general effort to capsize the author and his work in order to hand over semantic authority to what Jeffrey Hart, a professor of English at Dartmouth, has called “imperial readers.”

And the implications, of course, go beyond the field of literature. It is the pursuit of truth itself that the modern critics spurn; more precisely, by reducing all truth to the level of opinion, they deny the legitimacy of distinctions between truth and error. Yet what is the goal of liberal education if not the ongoing search for truth? If education cannot help to separate truth from falsehood, beauty from vulgarity, right from wrong, then what can it teach us?

III: WHERE THE LOGIC LEADS

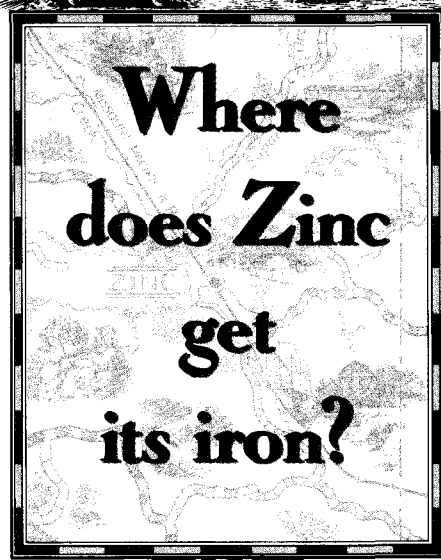
SOME CONSERVATIVE COMMENTATORS HAVE PROCLAIMED the futility of the new critical enterprises, and lamented the fate of the humanities if scholars like many of those who have been discussed here continue to enjoy wide academic influence. They have generally misapprehended the importance of the new scholarship, not recognizing that strange and abstruse literary and philosophical movements have gained the allegiance of large segments of academia in the past,

and that in this respect the current deconstructionist fad is not very different from Cambridge neo-Platonism or late-medieval Averroism. It is surely the case that Dante and Shakespeare will continue to be read long after Jacques Derrida and Stanley Fish are reduced to footnotes.

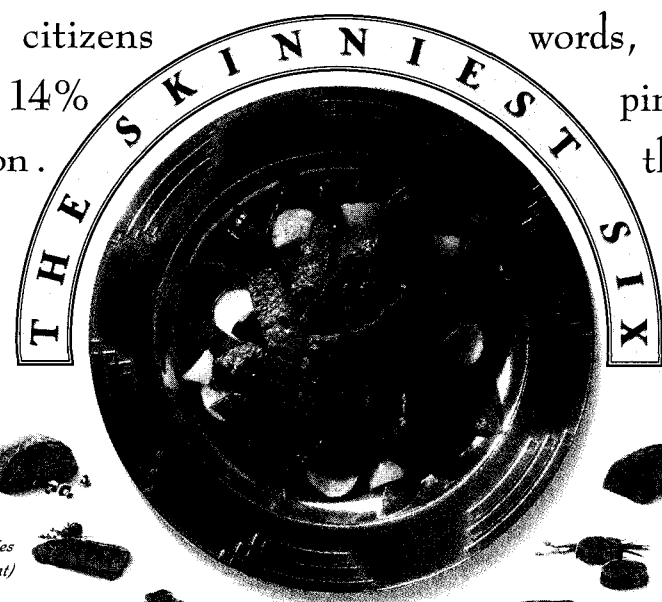
The big problem is not reader-response theory or deconstructionism per se; it is the approach to politics and education that these literary styles abet, and that has pro-



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pelled them to the forefront of the victims' revolution on campus. Stanley Fish's politics, in other words, are less significant than the politics that have elevated Stanley Fish, and created his current celebrity and marketability. It is the ideology that these modern critics serve that explains their popularity across various disciplines. To illuminate this underlying ideology, one simply has to ask who most benefits from, and thus gravitates toward, the new scholarship.

FOR A YOUNGER GENERATION OF SCHOLARS WITH A highly developed sense of activism, the new thinking offers special political rewards. This fact may not be evident because of the seeming neutrality of a critical approach like deconstructionism, which appears uniformly hostile to all texts, whatever their claims to authority. But in fact deconstructionists treat some works with uncharacteristic respect, leaving their authority unchallenged. Marx, for instance, never seems to be deconstructed, nor does Foucault, or Lacan, or Derrida, or Barthes. Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., seem to enjoy immunity. There may be an entire gender exception for women. In fact, the targets of critics at Duke, Yale, and elsewhere fit a distinct cultural pattern. Yet if, as we often read, Zora Neale Hurston is just as good as Milton, why not subject her to the same critical undoing?

In a candid moment the deconstructionist J. Hillis Miller revealed that his critical project was aimed at "demolishing beyond hope of repair the machine of Western metaphysics." Geoffrey Hartman, of Yale University, has observed that, contrary to the view generally held in the academic world, deconstructionism is not merely destructive; it also has a positive function. It can fairly be described as "restitutive criticism," Hartman has written. While dismantling classical Western texts, Hartman advocated a "Philomela Project," which he defined as "the restoration of voice to mute classes of people." The effect was to produce "a conspicuous increase of guilt-feelings about culture as such." For deconstructionists, "the challenge becomes how to support Third World writing . . . without reinstating once again the contested notion of privilege."

Fredric Jameson, of Duke, a Marxist theorist, sees the new scholarship as consistent with his mission: "to create a Marxist culture in this country, to make Marxism an unavoidable presence in American social, cultural and intellectual life, in short to form a Marxist intelligentsia for the struggles of the future." Jane Tompkins, the feminist scholar, has explained the nexus between relativism and political activism. "The New Critics had objected to confusing the poem with its results in order to separate literature from other kinds of discourse and to give criticism an objective basis for its procedures," Tompkins has written.

The later reader-response critics deny that criticism has such an objective basis because they deny the existence of objective texts and indeed the possibility of objectiv-

ity altogether. . . . The net result of this epistemological revolution is to repoliticize literature and literary criticism. When discourse is responsible for reality and not merely a reflection of it, then whose discourse prevails makes all the difference.

It is one thing to say that our knowledge of ideas and events is necessarily influenced by a social and historical context, and that in most areas purely objective truth is elusive, even impossible. It does not follow from this view, however, that all theories or interpretations are equally plausible, or that scholarship is incapable of moving asymptotically toward the ideal of truth. The new critics go beyond the assertion of contingent knowledge to suggest that the very ideal of objectivity is a mirage, and that it is therefore perfectly legitimate for teachers to cast aside pretensions of impartiality and to impose their politically preferred ideas on students. When the traditional norms of scholarship no longer rein in the instinct for activism, license is given for uninhibited ideological proselytizing.

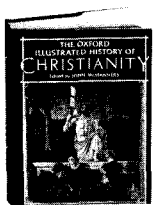
WHAT IS THE SPECIFIC APPEAL OF THIS CRITICAL project to minorities? It is precisely because the new thinking is seen as advancing the ideological claims of the minority victims' revolution on campus that it enjoys its current favor. Yet some of the specific benefits that the new scholarship holds for minority students and faculty are not immediately obvious.

First, by maintaining the arbitrariness of all standards, the Duke critics make it more respectable within the university for minority-group members to be admitted or hired without reference to the reactionary notion of academic merit. Once the concept of academic standards is shown to be a shibboleth, there is no reason not to reject it and adopt whatever alternative seems expedient.

Second, the critics suggest that affirmative action, whether on the student or on the faculty level, is not really a program that compensates the disadvantaged for historic discrimination but rather a means of enriching the university through the importation of "minority perspectives" that could not possibly be supplied by whites. The reduction of intelligence to race and gender categories—"white intelligence," "black intelligence," "female intelligence"—allows some people to establish their academic credentials on this basis and to feel justified in doing so, even if their particular perspective proves difficult to define. I asked Erdman Palmore, who teaches a course on race relations at Duke, what constitutes a black perspective. Palmore shook his head. "I have no idea," he said. "I am white. If I knew what a black perspective was, we wouldn't need blacks to provide it." Why, then, was he, a white man, teaching a course that engaged issues of black history and black consciousness? "It would be better to have a black teach my course," Palmore agreed. Did he think it was possible for a woman to teach Shakespeare? Palmore looked puzzled. "Oh, I see what

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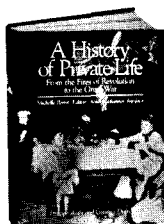
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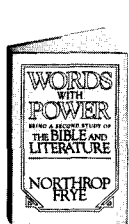
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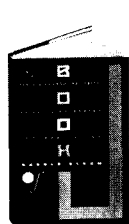
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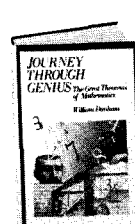
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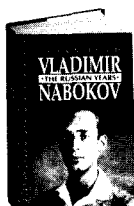
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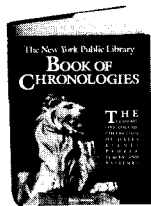
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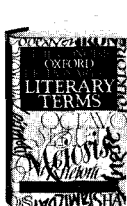
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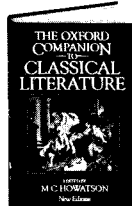
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you're getting at. He was a man. Yes, that is a problem. I don't know the answer, I must confess."

Third, by reducing truth to bias, and knowledge to ideology, some believe they can win greater rewards than they might have by struggling to meet traditional academic-review criteria, such as the publishing requirements for hiring and tenure.

Fourth, the new scholarship offers benefits in the classroom. Professors concerned about the relative scarcity of Third World, black, and feminist "great works" can now in good conscience assign Alice Walker instead of Jane Austen, *The Son of Old Man Hat* instead of *The Divine Comedy*. They can give up the idea that it is necessary, or even desirable, to study the classics of Western thought. Moreover, minority scholars may now believe that if the Western classics are consulted at all, they should be read from a "victim's perspective," thus enriching the text. Instead of Plato's dialogues enlightening them, they now enlighten Plato's dialogues.

Finally, one can discover in the new scholarship a justification for the systematic venting of grievances against the basic systems of American society, which the new scholars commonly consider "institutionally racist." These systems—democracy, the free market, due process, and so on—are largely procedural, and are intended to establish a neutral framework that allows all citizens to pursue happiness and safeguard their rights. Such institutions, however, can sometimes prove to be obstacles to contemporary social agendas. The new scholarship counsels that ostensibly neutral principles and systems are in fact ideologically loaded, and in some cases mere façades for bigotry.

Is Nothing Sacred?

THE RADICAL SKEPTICISM CULTIVATED AT DUKE and elsewhere rejects the possibility that human beings can rise above their circumstances. We are all presumed to be entirely products of our race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. All principles and standards are subordinate to political and social pressure and expediency. When these forces drive a culture in an undesirable direction, however, it is impossible, under the terms now fashionable, to develop nonarbitrary reasons for resistance. If Germans during the 1920s and 1930s were mere "products of their time," on what grounds of principle could they be expected to oppose the rising tide of fascism? This is not merely a theoretical issue, as the deconstructionist movement found out in recent years, when it became embroiled in a controversy that may serve as an object lesson about the price of critical indulgence.

In 1989 deconstructionists became alarmed when it was confirmed by Victor Farias, in his book *Heidegger and Nazism*, that the philosopher Martin Heidegger, whom Jacques Derrida has called the intellectual progenitor of

deconstruction, harbored strong Nazi sympathies until (and probably during) the Second World War. "The Fuehrer, and he alone, is the sole German reality and law, today and in the future," Heidegger said in 1933. In a letter requesting endorsements for a speech of his that praised Hitler, Heidegger wrote, "Of course it is clear that no non-Aryans should appear on the signature page." His correspondence was frequently signed "Heil Hitler." Such information was generally ignored or dismissed as reflecting an aberration until it recently surfaced that Paul de Man, a Yale professor and, with Derrida, a dominating influence in deconstruction, wrote pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic articles for a Belgian newspaper during the early 1940s. Among other things, De Man called for resistance to "Semitic infiltration of all aspects of European life." He called for Jews to be deported to a separate colony. He praised French collaboration with Hitler.

At first De Man's students and protégés—some of them Jewish—heatedly denied or downplayed his anti-Semitism. Later they acknowledged it but ascribed it to youthful error. The most candid of them admitted the damning force of the revelations but, in a rearguard action, denied any connection between De Man's political writings and his literary theories. But De Man did not abandon or recant his opinions, and never expressed a word of remorse about them.

By way of apology the deconstructionist J. Hillis Miller has observed that De Man "was by no means in these early writings totally fascist, antisemitic and collaborationist," implying that these qualities are not so bad in moderation. Derrida employed the techniques of deconstructionist discourse to argue that De Man's wartime writings were contradictory, their meaning opaque, and their ultimate intention indeterminable.

Of course, there is nothing uncertain about what De Man said. And his later writings even seem to attempt to justify his behavior. "It is always possible to excuse any guilt," he wrote in *Allegories of Reading* (1979), because "the experience always exists simultaneously as fictional discourse and as empirical event and it is never possible to decide which one of the two possibilities is the right one. The indecision makes it possible to excuse the bleakness of crimes."

In a recent debate on deconstructionism in *The New York Review of Books*, Charles L. Griswold, Jr., of Howard University, alleged, and his opponent Denis Donoghue, of New York University, admitted, that "nothing in deconstruction provides an ethical criticism of Nazism." One might add that nothing in deconstructionism even *permits* such a criticism. Griswold maintained that "deconstruction dissolves notions of personal accountability and responsibility"; indeed, it "renders theoretically unintelligible basic moral terms such as good and evil." The Duke critics must confront the question of the opening that relativist theories create for totalitarian ideologies, the potential for cognitive skepticism to accompany, and

accentuate, malignant political fanaticism. The rejection of authority can sometimes result, paradoxically, in an embrace of authoritarianism.

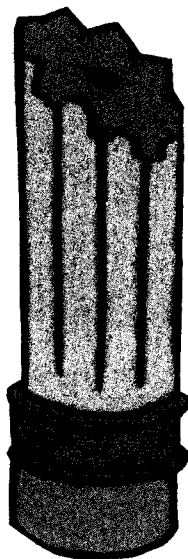
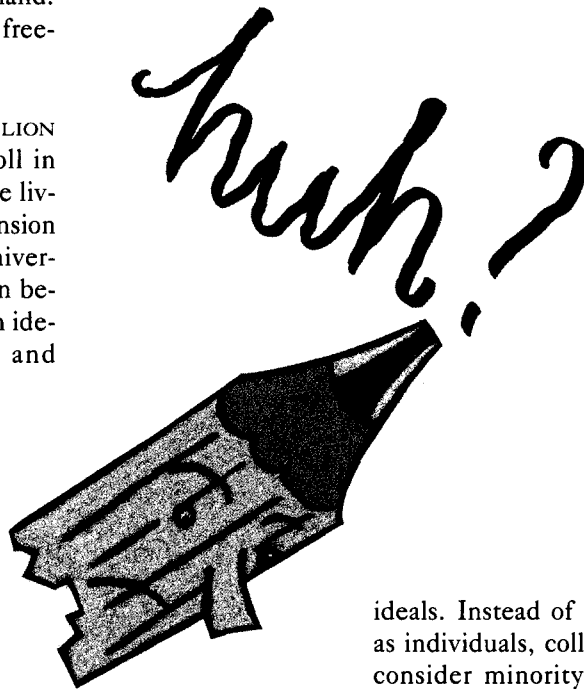
Indeed, it can happen with insidious ease. Last fall a group of forty-six professors at Duke decided to mobilize against the new thinking by setting up a local chapter of the National Association of Scholars, a group based in Princeton, New Jersey, and dedicated to "rational discourse as the foundation of academic life in a free and democratic society." Duke's chapter includes professors from all segments of the political spectrum; its founder, the political scientist James David Barber, describes himself as a liberal Democrat. No sooner did Barber announce a date for a meeting than a violent reaction ensued. Stanley Fish accused the new group of "racism, sexism, and homophobia," and he wrote the university provost demanding that members be barred from serving on academic committees that have any say on matters affecting the curriculum. The Duke faculty rejected the demand. On this point, at least, the old standard of academic freedom seems for the time being to have prevailed.

EACH FALL SOME 13 MILLION STUDENTS, 2.5 MILLION of them members of minority groups, enroll in American colleges. Most of these students are living away from home for the first time; their apprehension is mixed with excitement and anticipation. At the university they hope to shape themselves as whole human beings, both intellectually and morally. Brimming with idealism, they wish to prepare themselves for full and independent lives in the workplace, at home, and as citizens of a democratic society. In short, what they seek is liberal education.

By the time these students graduate, many colleges and universities will not have met their need for all-round development. Instead, by precept and example, they will have taught them that all rules are unjust and all preferences are principled; that justice is simply the will of the stronger party; that standards and values are arbitrary, and the ideal of the educated person is largely a figment of bourgeois white male ideology; that individual rights are a red flag signaling social privilege, and should be subordinated to the claims of group interest; that all knowledge can be reduced to politics and should be pursued not for its own sake but for the political end of power; that convenient myths and well-intentioned lies can substitute

for truth; that double standards are acceptable as long as they are enforced to the benefit of minority victims; that disputes are best settled not by rational and civil debate but by accusation, intimidation, and official prosecution; that the university stands for nothing in particular and has no claim to be exempt from outside pressures; and that a multiracial society cannot be based on fair rules that apply to every person but must rather be held together with a forced rationing of power among separatist racial groups. In short, instead of liberal education, what many American students are getting is its diametrical opposite: an education in closed-mindedness and intolerance—which is to say, illiberal education.

Ironically, the young blacks, Hispanics, and other certified minority-group members in whose name the victims' revolution is being conducted are the ones worst served by the American university's abandonment of liberal



ideals. Instead of treating them as individuals, colleges typically consider minority members in terms of their group, important only insofar as their collective numbers satisfy the formulas of "diversity." Since many of these students depend on a college degree to enhance their career opportunities, their high dropout rate reflects tremendous suffering and a sense of betrayal. Even more than others, minority students arrive on campus searching for principles of personal identity and social justice; thus they are particularly disillusioned when they leave empty-handed. Moreover, most minority graduates will admit, when pressed, that if their experience in college is any indication, the prospects for race relations in the country at large are gloomy. If the university model is replicated in society at large, far from bringing ethnic harmony, it will reproduce and magnify in the broader culture the lurid bigotry, intolerance, and balkanization of campus life. □



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reckons I’m like
A GLASS
of warm
MILK.
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GEORGETOWN
get a good night’s
SLEEP.”**

LARRY ADKINS
Georgetown Fire Chief

UNTIL LAST YEAR, GEORGETOWN, Kentucky, relied mostly on volunteers to protect the town’s 12,500 people.

Even though they’re a dedicated bunch of guys, they were hard-pressed to keep up with the demands of a growing town. It’s the kind of situation that could keep you up nights.

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Since his appointment, Larry Adkins has gone through the place like a tornado.

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But we’re just as pleased to know that aside from 36 firefighters, everyone in Georgetown is sleeping sounder these days.

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INVESTING IN THE INDIVIDUAL

A Short Story



A New Life

by Mary Ward Brown

THEY MEET BY CHANCE IN FRONT OF THE bank. Elizabeth is a recent widow, pale and dry-eyed, unable to cry. Paul, an old friend, old boyfriend, starts smiling the moment he sees her. She's never seen him look so happy, she thinks. Under one arm he carries a wide farm checkbook, a rubber band around it so things won't fall out.

"Well. This is providential." He grips her hand and holds on, ignoring the distance he's long kept between them. Everything about him seems animated. Even his hair, thick, dark, shot with early gray, stands up slightly from his head instead of lying down flat. In the sunlight the gray looks electric. "We've been thinking about you," he says, still smiling. "Should have been to see you."

"But you *did* come." Something is different about him, she thinks, something major. Not just the weight he's put on.

"We came when everyone else was there and you didn't need us. We should have been back long ago. How are you?"

"Fine," she says, to end it. "Thank you."

"You don't look fine."

He frowns. "You're still grieving, when John is with God now, and well again. Happy."

So that's it. She's heard that Paul and his wife, Louise, are in a religious group just started up outside the church. They call themselves Workers of the Vineyard. Like a rock band, someone said.

Elizabeth turns toward the bank as if she hasn't heard what Paul said. Behind her, small-town traffic moves up and down the street, a variety of midsize cars and pickup trucks, plus an occasional big car or van. In front, the newly remodeled bank updates a street of old brick buildings. Some are painted white, green, gray. Around the corner the beauty shop is pink.

This is the southern Bible Belt, where people talk about God the way they talk about the weather, about His will and His blessings, about why He lets things happen. The

Vineyard people say also that God talks to them. Their meeting place is a small house on Green Street, where they meet, according to neighbors, "all the time."

Their leader is the new young pastor of the Presbyterian church, called by his first name, Steve.

Regular church members look on the group with suspicion. "Crazy" is the word that reaches Steve.

"Some thought Jesus was a little crazy too," he has countered, with a smile. He is a spellbinding preacher, and no one moves or dozes while he speaks, but his church congregation is split in two. Some are for him and some against him, but no one is neutral. He is defined by extremes.

Paul opens the door to the bank for Elizabeth. "What are you doing tonight?" he asks, from behind her.

She whirls about to face him.

"Louise and I could come over after supper. How about it?" He winks.

He couldn't get along without the winks and jokes, Elizabeth had decided years ago. They were to cover up all he meant to hide—new hurts, old wounds, the real Paul Dudley. Only once had she ever seen him show pain. When his favorite dog, always with him, had been

hit by a truck, he'd covered his face with his hands when he told her. But the minute she'd touched him, ready to cry too, he'd stiffened. "I'll have to get another one,"

he'd said, more to himself than to her. And right away he had. Another liver-spotted pointer.

"You're turning down a good way of life, though," her mother had said a little sadly, when she didn't take the ring. It had been his mother's diamond. He'd also inherited a large tract of land and a house in the country.

Among Elizabeth's reasons was one she'd never mentioned, for fear that it might sound trivial. He had simply made her nervous. Wherever they'd gone, to concerts, plays, movies, he hadn't been able to sit still and listen but had had to look around and whisper, start conversations, pick up dropped programs. Go for more popcorn. He had rummaged through his hair, fiddled with his tie,

She needed to start over, she knew, but what could she do with a band of Christians out to save her soul?



jiggled keys in his pocket, until it had been all she could do not to say, "Stop that or I'll scream!"

He hadn't seemed surprised when she told him. Subdued at first, he had rallied and joked as he went out the door. But he'd cut her out of his life from then on and ignored all her efforts to be friendly. Not until both were married had he even stopped on the street to say hello.

Back home now in her clean, orderly kitchen, Elizabeth has put away groceries and stored the empty bags. Without delay she has subtracted the checks she wrote downtown. Attention to detail has become compulsive with her. It is all that holds her together, she thinks.

JUST BEFORE DAYLIGHT-SAVINGS DARK PAUL and Louise drive up in a white station wagon. Paul is wearing a fresh short-sleeved shirt, the tops of its sleeves still pressed together like uncut pages in a book. In one hand he carries a Bible as worn as a wallet.

Louise, in her late forties like Elizabeth, is small and blonde. Abandoned first by a father who'd left home, then by a mother his leaving had destroyed, she'd been brought up by worn-out grandparents. Her eyes are like those of an unspoiled pet, waiting for a sign to be friendly.

When Elizabeth asks if they'd like something cool to drink, now or later, they laugh. It's a long-standing joke

in Wakefield. "Mr. Paul don't drink nothing but sweet-milk," a worker on his place said years ago.

"Now would be nice," he says, with his happy new smile.

Elizabeth leads the way to a table in her kitchen, a large light room with one end for dining. The table, of white wood with an airy glass top, overlooks her back lawn. While she fills goblets with tea and ice, Paul gazes out the window, humming to himself, drumming on the glass top. Louise admires the marigolds, snapdragons, and petunias in bloom. Her own flowers have been neglected this year, she says. Elizabeth brings out a pound cake still warm from the oven.

"Let's bless it," Paul says, when they're ready.

He holds out one hand to her and the other to Louise. His hand is trembling and so warm it feels feverish. Because of her?, Elizabeth can't help thinking. No, everyone knows he's been happy with his wife. Louise's hand is cool and steady.

He bows his head. "Lord, we thank You for this opportunity to witness in Your name. We know that You alone can comfort our friend in her sorrow. Bring her, we pray, to the knowledge of Your saving grace and give her Your peace, which passes understanding. We ask it for Your sake and in Your name."

He smiles a benediction, and Elizabeth cuts the cake.

"The reason we're here, Elizabeth"—he ignores the tea and cake before him—"is that my heart went out to you this morning at the bank. You can't give John up, and it's tearing you apart."

He's right, she thinks. She can't give John up and she is torn apart, after almost a year.

"We have the cure for broken hearts," he says, as if stating a fact.

Louise takes a bite of cake, but when Paul doesn't, she puts down her fork. On her left hand, guarded by her wedding band, is a ring that Elizabeth has seen before.

"I have something to ask you, Elizabeth." He looks away tactfully. "Are you saved?"

"I'm afraid not, Paul," she says, in a moment. "What happened to John did something to my faith. John didn't deserve all that suffering, or to die in his prime. I can't seem to accept it."

"Well, that's natural. Understandable. I was rebellious myself at one time."

Strange, she thinks. She didn't remember him as being religious at all. On the contrary, he'd worked all day Sunday on a tractor while everyone else went to church.

"But I had an encounter with Jesus Christ that changed my life," he continues. "I kept praying, with all my heart, and He finally came to me. His presence was as real as yours is now. You have to really want Him, though. Most people have to hit rock bottom, the way I did, before they do. You have to be down so low you say, 'Lord, I can't make it on my own. You'll have to help me. *You* take over!'"

When was that? She tries to think. Things had gone so well for him, it seemed. He had all he'd ever wanted out of life—all he'd wanted when they were dating, at least—a big family, and to live on his land. He'd been an only child whose parents had died young. Louise had been orphaned too, in a way. So they'd had a child every year or two before they quit, a station wagon full of healthy, suntanned children. All driving themselves by now, Elizabeth had noticed.

As for herself, rock bottom was back in that hospital room with John, sitting in a chair by his bed. Six months maybe, a year at the most, they'd just told her in the hall. She'd held his hand until the Demerol took effect and his hand had gone limp in hers. Then she'd leaned her head on the bed beside him and prayed, with all her heart. From hospital room to hospital room she had prayed, and at home in between.

"I've said that too, Paul, many times. I prayed, and nothing happened. Why would He come to you and not me?"

"Because you were letting something stand in your way, my dear." His smile is back, full force. "For Him to come in, you have to get rid of self—first of all your self-will! 'Not my will but Thine be done,' He said on the cross."

He breaks off, turns to the tea and cake before him. With the first bite of cake he shuts his eyes. A blissful smile spreads over his face.

"Umh, umh!" He winks at Louise. "How about this pound cake, Mama!"

LATE THE NEXT AFTERNOON ELIZABETH IS watering flowers in her back yard. Before, she grew flowers to bring in the house, zinnias for pottery pitchers, bulbs for clear glass vases. Now she grows them for themselves, and seldom cuts them. She has a new, irrational notion that scissors hurt the stems. After what she's seen of pain, she wants to hurt nothing that lives.

From where she stands with the hose, she watches a small red car turn into her driveway. In front of the house two young girls in sundresses get out.

"Mrs. North?" the first girl says, when Elizabeth comes up to meet them. "You probably don't remember me, but I'm Beth Woodall, and this is Cindy Lewis. We're from Workers of the Vineyard."

Beth is blonde and pretty—a young Louise, Elizabeth thinks. Her smiles spin off like bubbles, but Cindy has a limp and something is wrong with one arm. Elizabeth doesn't look at it directly.

"What can I do for you girls?"

"Oh, we just came to see you," Beth says. "Paul and Louise thought we might cheer you up."

In the living room Beth is the speaker. "We all knew your husband from the paper, Mrs. North. He was won-

derful! My dad read every line he ever wrote, and says this town is lost without him." She pushes back her hair, anchors it behind one ear. Her nails, overlong, pale as seashells, seem to lag behind her fingers. "We've all been praying for you."

The hose has made a wet spot on the front of Elizabeth's skirt. To avoid looking up, she rubs it with her hand.

"I know how you feel, though," Beth says quickly. "Remember Billy Moseley, who was killed in that wreck last year? He was my boyfriend since grammar school, and we'd have gotten married someday, if he'd lived. We were just always . . . together." Her eyes fill up with tears.

Elizabeth remembers Billy, handsome, polite. A star athlete killed by a drunk driver. She feels a deep stir of sympathy, but like everything painful since John died, it freezes before it can surface. Frozen, it seems packed in her chest, as in the top of a refrigerator so full the door will hardly shut. She looks back at Beth with dry, guilty eyes.

"Well, I'm all right now," Beth says. "But I thought for a while it would kill me. I didn't want to live without Billy, until I met the people at The Vineyard. They made me see it was God's will for him to die and me to live and serve the Lord. Now I know Billy's waiting for me, and it's not as bad as it was." She shrugs. "I try to help Billy's mother, but she won't turn it over to the Lord."

The room is growing dark. Elizabeth gets up to turn on more lights, which cast a roseate glow on their faces, hands, feet in open sandals. "Would you girls like a Coke?"

"Yes, ma'am." Beth blinks her eyes dry. "A Coke would be nice."

They follow Elizabeth to the kitchen, where she pours Coca-Cola into glasses filled with ice cubes.

"You must get lonesome here by yourself," Cindy says, looking around. "Are your children away from home or something?"

"I don't have children, Cindy." Elizabeth hands her a glass and a paper napkin. "My husband and I wanted a family but couldn't have one. All we had was each other."

"Ah!" Beth says quickly. "We'll be your children, then. Won't we, Cindy?"

IT IS SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING AND ELIZABETH is drinking coffee, staring dejectedly out the kitchen window. During the night she had a dream about John. He was alive, not dead.

John had been editor-publisher of the Wakefield *Sun*, the town's weekly paper, had written most of the copy himself. In the dream he and Elizabeth were in bed for the night.

John had liked to work in bed and she had liked to read beside him, so they'd gone to bed early as a rule.

Propped up on pillows, he had worked on editorials, for which he'd been known throughout the state. At times, though, he had put aside his clipboard and taken off his glasses. His eyes, blue-gray and rugged, like a tweed jacket he'd worn so many winters, would take on a look that made the book fall from her hand and later, sometimes, onto the floor.

In the dream, as he looked at her, the phone by their bed rang. He'd forgotten a meeting, he told her, out of bed at once. He had to get down there. It had already started, a meeting he was to cover for the paper. He hurried into clothes but stopped at the bedroom door.

"I'll be right back," he said, like a mischievous boy.

But he wasn't back and never would be, she was reminded, wide awake. In the dark she checked the space beside her with her hand to be sure, and her grief seemed new again, stronger than ever, reinforced by time. If only she could cry, she thought, the way most widows do! *Cry*, people told her, over and over, but she couldn't. That part of her seemed to freeze up and go numb every time.

She woke from the dream at two o'clock in the morning, and hasn't slept since. Now she's glad to be up with something to do, even if it's only an appointment with her lawyer. She has sold John's business but kept the building, and the legalities are not yet over. She wants to be on time, is always on time. It is part of her fixation on details, as if each thing attended to were somehow on a list that if completed could bring back meaning to her life.

In the fall she will go back to teaching school, but her heart is not in it as before. For twenty years she was John's wife first of all, from deadline to deadline, through praise, blame, long stretches of indifference. He couldn't have done it without her, he'd said, with each award and honor he'd been given. Now no other role seems right for her, which is her problem, she's thinking as the front doorbell rings.

Louise is there in a fresh summer dress, her clean hair shining in the sun. She smells of something lightly floral.

"May I come in?"

Still in a nightgown and robe, aware of the glazed-over look in her eyes, Elizabeth steps back, opens the door wide. "How about a cup of coffee?" she says, forcing herself to smile in return.

At the white table Louise takes the place she had before. "I won't stay long," she says.

Elizabeth puts on a new pot of coffee, gets out a cup and saucer and a cloth napkin. Outside all is quiet. Stores and offices won't open until nine, so why is Louise in town at this hour?

"I was praying for you," she says, as if in answer. "But the Lord told me to come and see you instead."

Elizabeth turns to look at her. "God told you?"

Their eyes meet. Louise nods.

"He wanted you to know that He loves you, that's all."

He wanted me to bring you His love." Her face turns a sudden bright pink, which deepens and spreads.

At a loss, Elizabeth goes for the coffee pot, pours a cup for Louise and one for herself. She has learned to drink hers black, but Louise adds milk and sugar. Both wait for the coffee to cool.

"Come with us to The Vineyard next time, Elizabeth," Louise says, all at once.

This is what she really came for, Elizabeth thinks, and it's a plea, as from someone safe on the bank to a swimmer having trouble in the water.

"It could save your life!" Louise says.

THE VINEYARD MEETING PLACE IS A NARROW, shotgun-style house of the 1890s, last used as a dentist's office. It has one large room in front and two small rooms in back. Having been welcomed and shown around, Elizabeth stands against the wall of the front room with Paul and Louise. The group is smaller than she expected, and not all Presbyterian. Some people are from other churches as well, all smiling and excited.

Everything revolves around Steve, a young man in

jeans who looks like a slight blonde Jesus. When Elizabeth is introduced, he looks deep into her eyes.

"Elizabeth," he says, as if he knows her already. "We were hoping you'd come. Welcome to The Vineyard!"

To her surprise, he says no more and moves on, but she has felt his power like the heat from a stove. She finds herself following him around the room with her eyes, wanting to know what he says to other people. Like a salesman sure of his product, he puts on no pressure.

The night is hot and windows are open, but no breeze comes through. Rotary fans monotonously sweep away the heat in front of them, in vain. Someone brings in a pitcher of Kool-Aid, which is passed around in paper cups.

"Okay, people." Steve holds up his cup, raises his voice for attention. "Let's have a song."

Everyone takes a seat on the floor, in a ring shaped by the long, narrow room. A masculine girl with short dark hair stands up. She tests one key, then another, low in her throat, before leading off. "We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord . . ."

Most of the singers are young, in shorts or jeans, but some are middle-aged or older. Of the latter, the majority are single women and widows like Elizabeth. The young

COVER NOTE

Hypocrite reader my
variant my almost
family we are so
few now it seems as though
we knew each other as
the words between us keep
assuming that we do
I hope I make sense to
you in the shimmer of
our days while the world we
cling to in common is

burning for I have not
the ancients' confidence
in the survival of
one track of syllables
nor in some ultimate
moment of insight that
supposedly will dawn
once and for all upon
a bright posterity
making clear only to
them what passes between

us now in a silence
on this side of the flames
so that from a distance
beyond appeal only
they of the future will
behold our true meaning
which eludes us as we
breathe reader beside your
timepiece do you believe
any such thing do the
children read what you do

when they read or can you
think the words will rise from
the page saying the same
things when they speak for us
no longer and then who
in the total city
will go on listening
to these syllables that
are ours and be able
still to hear moving through
them the last rustling of

paws in high grass the one
owl hunting along this
spared valley the tongues of
the free trees our uncaught
voices reader I do
not know that anyone
else is waiting for these
words that I hoped might seem
as though they had occurred
to you and you would take
them with you as your own

—W. S. Merwin



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people sit with folded legs, leaning comfortably forward, and the men draw up one leg or the other. But the women, in pantsuits or sleeveless dresses, sit up straight, like paper dolls bent in the middle.

The song gains momentum for the chorus, which ends, "Yes, they'll know—oh, we are Christians by our love!"

"All *right*," Steve says. "Time to come to our Lord in prayer."

Someone scrambles up to turn off the light switch while someone else lights a candle on the Kool-Aid table. In the semi-darkness Steve reaches out to his neighbor on each side, and a chain of hands is quickly formed.

Elizabeth, without a hand to hold in her new single life, is glad to link in. She could be joining the human race again, she thinks, smiling at the young woman on her left and Paul on her right. Paul's hand no longer trembles but feels as it did in high school—not thrilling but dependable, something to count on.

The room is suddenly hushed. "For the benefit of our visitor," Steve says, "we begin with sentence prayers around the circle, opening our hearts and minds to God." He bows his head. "We thank You again, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of being here. Guide us, we pray, in all we say and do, that it may be for the extension of Your kingdom. Thank You as always for each other but above all for Your blessed son, Jesus, who is with us tonight, here in this circle."

Oh, no, Elizabeth thinks. *I can't do this. How did I ever get here?* She's never prayed out loud in her life except in unison.

But a thin boy on Steve's left is already speaking. "You turned me around, Lord. Before You, all I lived for was that bottle. I didn't think about nobody but myself. . ."

Eagerly, one after the other, they testify, confess, ask help in bringing others to Jesus as Lord and Savior. They speak of the devil as if he's someone in town, a troublemaker they can't avoid.

A check-out girl from the supermarket starts to cry and can't stop. From around the circle come murmurs of "God bless you" and "We love you," until her weeping begins to subside.

"My heart's too full tonight," the girl sobs at last. "I have to pass."

The room begins to feel crowded and close. On each side Elizabeth's hands are gripped tighter. The back of her blouse is sticking to her skin.

"Praise God!" a man cries out in the middle of someone's prayer.

"Help me, Lord," a woman whimpers.

A teenage boy starts to pray, his words eerily unintelligible. Tongues?, Elizabeth wonders, electrified. They do it here, she's heard. But something nasal in his voice gives the clue, and she has a wild impulse to laugh. He's not speaking in tongues but is tongue-tied from a cleft palate.

Too soon Elizabeth hears Paul's voice beside her, charged with emotion. He's praying about the sin of pride in his life, but she can't pay attention because she will be next. Heavy, galloping hoofbeats seem to have taken the place of her heart.

When he's through, she says nothing. She would like to say "I pass," or something, anything, but is unable to decide on, much less utter, a word. Her hands are wet with cold perspiration. She tries to withdraw them, but Paul on one side and the young woman on the other hold on tight. Fans hum back and forth as her silence stretches out.

At last someone starts to pray out of turn, and the circle is mended. As the prayers move back to Steve, Elizabeth gives a sigh of relief and tries to ease her position on the floor without being obvious. Steve gives a new directive.

"We'll now lift up to God those with special needs tonight." He allows them a moment to think. "I lift up Jane, our choir director, in the medical center for tests and diagnosis. Her tests begin in the morning."

They pray in silence for Jane, for someone in the midst of divorce, for a man who's lost his job. An unnamed friend with an unidentified problem is presented.

Louise clears her throat for attention, and then hesitates before speaking out. When she does, her voice is girlish and sweet, as usual.

"I lift up Elizabeth," she says.

ELIZABETH HAS AVOIDED THE TELEPHONE ALL day, though she's heard it ring many times. The weather is cloudy and cool, so she has spent the morning outside, weeding, hoeing, raking, and has come to one decision. She will not see the soul-savers today.

Tomorrow, perhaps, she can face them. Today she will do anything not to. They were holding her up not for her but for them, she believes. They refuse to look on the dark side of reality, and they want her to blink it away too. If she can smile before loss, grief, and death, so can they. They're like children in a fairy tale, singing songs, holding hands. Never mind the dark wood, wolves, and witches. Or birds that eat up the breadcrumbs.

During lunch she takes the phone off the hook, eats in a hurry, and goes back out with magazines and a book. For supper she will go to Breck's for barbecue and visit with whoever's there. When she comes back, the day will be over. "One day at a time" is the new widow's motto.

She is drying off from a shower when the front doorbell rings. She doesn't hurry, even when it rings again and someone's finger stays on the buzzer. The third time, she closes the bathroom door carefully, little by little, so as not to be heard. Gingerly, as if it might shock her, she flips off the light switch.

Soon there is knocking on the back door, repeated several times. She can hear voices but not words. When she

continues to do nothing, hardly breathing for fear they will somehow know or divine that she's there, the knocking stops and the voices, along with retreating footsteps, fade away. Through a sneaked-back window curtain she can see the small red car moving off.

Suddenly, in her mind's eye, she can also see herself, as from a distance, towel clutched like a fig leaf, hiding from a band of Christians out to save her soul!

For the first time in her widowhood she laughs when she's alone. It happens before she knows it, like a hiccup or a sneeze. With abandon, such as she'd thought lost to her forever, she draws out the laugh as long as possible, winding up with a chuckle.

Smiling for a change, as if playing a game, she dresses in a hurry and picks up her purse. She's about to walk out the back door when the front doorbell rings.

This time, keys still in hand, she goes at once to open her front door.

Beth and Cindy, plus Steve and two policemen, stare back at her. The policemen are in uniform, dark blue pants and lighter blue shirts, with badges, and insignia, and guns on their belts. Obviously they've been deciding how to get into the house without a key.

For a moment no one speaks. Then Beth, wide-eyed, bursts out, "You scared us to death, Mrs. North! We thought you had passed out or something. We knew you were in there because of your car."

"I didn't feel like seeing anyone today." Elizabeth's voice is calm and level. Where did it come from, she thinks, that unruffled voice? She should be mad or upset, and she's not.

"Sorry to bother you, Mrs. North," the older policeman says. "Your friends here were worried."

And suddenly, out of the blue, Elizabeth is suffused with what seems pure benevolence. For a split second, and for no reason, she is sure that everything is overall right in the world. And not just for her but for everyone, including the dead.

"No bother," she says, half dazed, to the policeman. "I thank you."

Steve has said nothing. His eyes are not innocent like Beth's and Cindy's. They are the eyes of a true believer, blessed or cursed with certainty. His focus has been steadily on her, but now it breaks away.

"Let's go, people," he says lightly. "God bless you, Elizabeth. Glad you're okay."

ELIZABETH HAS SLEPT ALL NIGHT, FOR ONCE. As she sits down to cereal and coffee, she is sure of one thing. She has to start what everyone tells her must be "a whole new life" without John, and she has to do it now. Though still frozen and numb inside, she has found that she can at least laugh. And she has experienced, however fleetingly, what must have been grace.

When she hears a car door slam out front—not once but twice—she gets up without waiting for anyone to ring or knock. It is Paul and Louise, for the first time not smiling. Paul has on khaki work clothes. Louise has brushed her hair on top, but underneath sleep tangles show.

On the living-room sofa they sit leaning forward. Paul rocks one knee from side to side, making his whole body shake from the tension locked inside him.

"They should have come to us instead of going to the police," he says at once. "They just weren't thinking."

"No, it was my fault," Elizabeth says. "I should have gone to the door."

"Why *didn't* you?" Louise wants to know.

"Well . . ." She looks down, falls silent.

"Our meeting upset you?" Paul asks in a moment.

Elizabeth's housecoat is old and too short. She starts checking the snaps down the front. They catch her like this every time, she thinks. Why can't they call, like everyone else, before they come?

"Level with us, honey," he says. "We're your friends. What upset you so much?"

Except for the sound of her fingertips on the cloth, the room is utterly quiet.

"We need to pray about this," Paul says. "Let's pray . . ."

"No!" Elizabeth is on her feet without meaning to be. "No, Paul. I can't, I'm sorry." She's out of breath, as from running. "This has got to stop! I can't be a Worker of the Vineyard. You're wasting your time on me. You'll have to find somebody else."

He says nothing for so long that a countdown seems to start up inside her. But then he stands up slowly, followed by Louise. At the door, with his hand on the knob, he turns to face her.

"Well, Elizabeth," he says, "I guess it's time to say good-bye."

Her heart slows down as if brakes had been applied. The beats become heavy, far apart. She can feel them in her ears, close to her brain.

"I'm sorry, Paul!" she says quickly. Before his unforgiving eyes she says it again, as if holding out a gift she knows to be inadequate. "I'm *sorry*!"

But this time he has no joke or smile. Without a word he takes Louise by the arm and they turn to go.

She watches them walk to the car side by side, not touching. Paul opens the door for Louise, shuts her safely in, and gets behind the wheel. The station wagon moves out of sight down the driveway.

Elizabeth's cereal is soggy, her coffee cold. She pushes it all away, props her elbows on the table, and buries her face in her hands. Suddenly, as from a thaw long overdue, she's crying. Sobs shake her shoulders. Tears roll down her cheeks, seep through her fingers, and run down her wrist. One drop falls on the glass top and sparkles like a jewel in the morning sunlight. □

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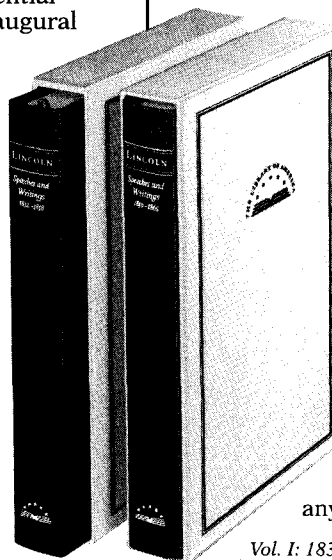
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The Great White Way has already become a kind of Disney World with dirt and real crime, an attraction that the people who used to support it can afford to visit only once a year. Even if Broadway is cleaned up, the author argues, the changes in New York City guarantee that it will never be what it was

THE DEATH OF BROADWAY

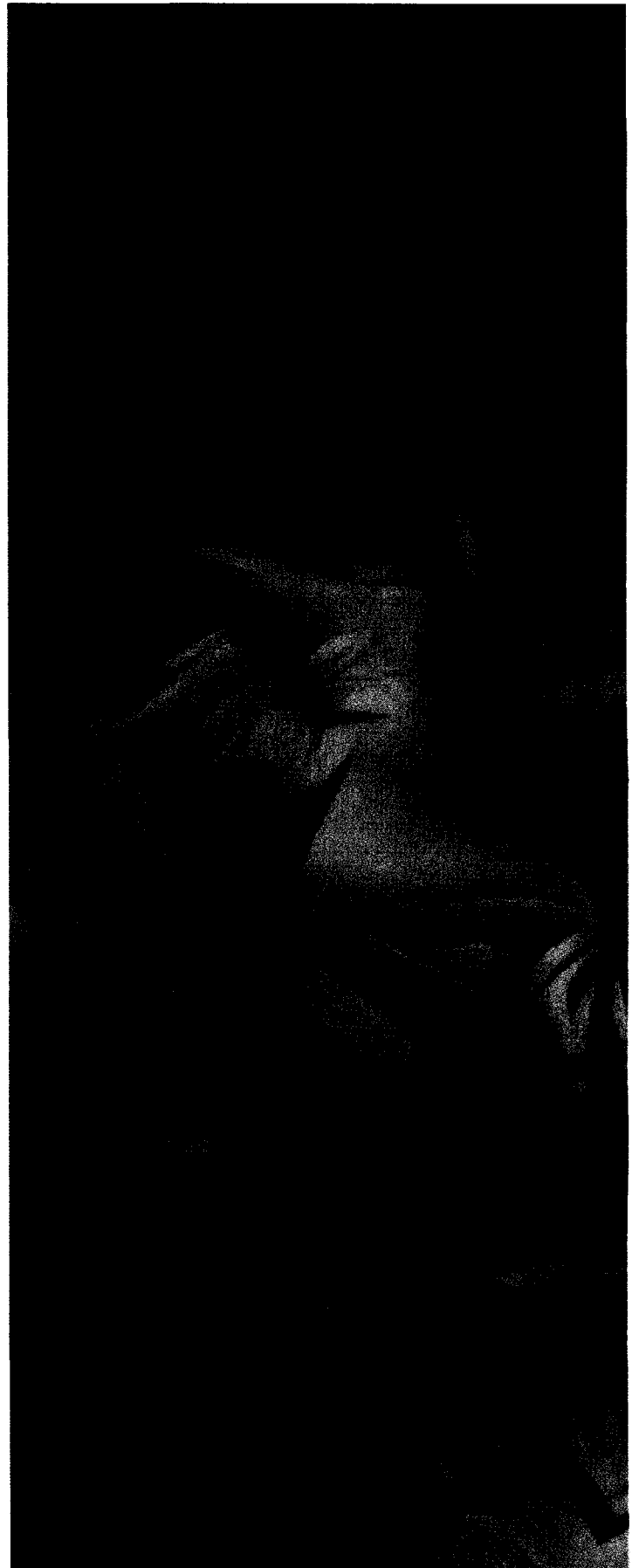
BY THOMAS M. DISCH



A CITY IS A MACHINE THAT WORKS BY INERTIA. By virtue of their solidity and expense, large buildings act as a brake on social change. Each one, from the most squalid tenement to the ritziest hotel, represents a way of life that has jelled into just this form and is jealous of its right to continue as is. Thus neighborhoods in the process of gentrification acquire graffiti threatening death to yuppie invaders, and all bastions of privilege hire doormen to defend them from riffraff. Finally, however, no single building, no street, no neighborhood, can hold its own against the glacial advance of larger social forces.

Right now such a social glacier is poised at the edge of New York City's already much eroded theater district. For many decades inertial real-estate values, abetted by landmark-designation legislation, have earned Broadway the dubious epithet "Fabulous Invalid." In the nineties the Fabulous Invalid is destined to become the Inglorious Corpse, and the Great White Way to become a graveyard for great white elephants, as, one by one, the thirty-six theaters left in the Broadway area find themselves unable to attract either shows or audiences.

Those who feel a professional obligation to contradict the handwriting on the wall—theater owners, producers, and press agents—can cite cheery statistics. The League of American Theatres and Producers announced last June that for the third year in a row Broadway set box-office records, with \$283 million in ticket sales. However,

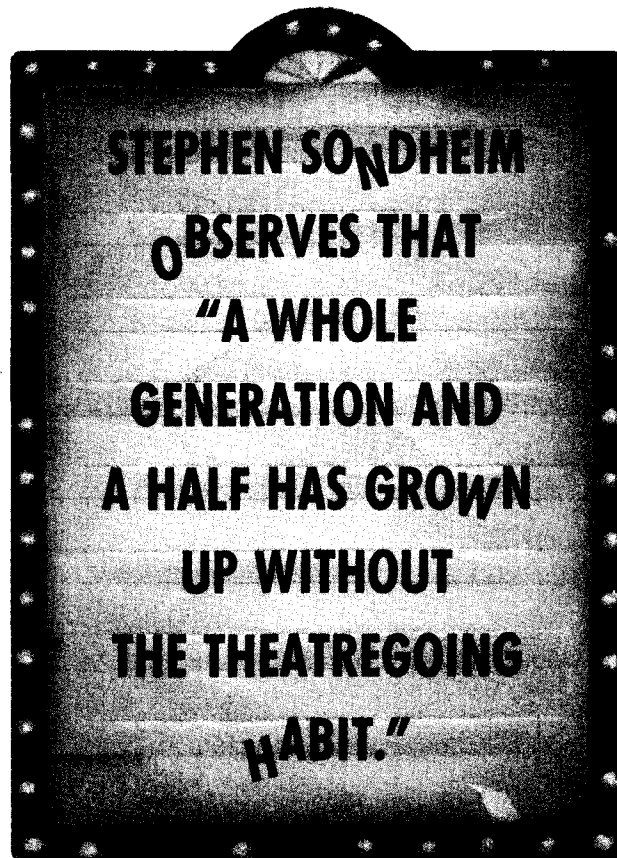




this record reflects not dramatically increased attendance but only higher ticket prices—as high as \$55 or \$60 for musicals. Actual attendance for the past four seasons was, in millions, 6.97, 8.14, 7.97, and 8.04. Ten seasons ago attendance totaled 10.82 million. Twenty-two years ago William Goldman noted in *The Season*, the best book about the Broadway theater ever written, that the 1967–1968 season had set an all-time high for ticket sales, \$59 million; then, too, the reason was higher ticket prices—soon to be as high as \$15.

The most revealing and dismaying contrast between Goldman's season and the one just past is in the number of plays produced. In the 1967–1968 season fifty-eight shows opened on Broadway: forty-four nonmusical plays (twenty-five dramas, nineteen comedies) and fourteen musicals. The 1989–1990 season yielded thirty-five shows: twenty-one nonmusical plays (six of them revivals) and twelve musicals (four of them revivals), plus two "special attractions." Musicals seem to be holding their own, but clearly "legit" drama (to use *Variety's* parlance) is an endangered species. In 1967–1968 there were new plays by Harold Pinter, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Tom Stoppard, Gore Vidal, Eugene O'Neill, Joe Orton, Edward Albee, Neil Simon, Peter Nichols, Lillian Hellman, Ira Levin, Peter Ustinov (two plays), and some twenty-seven other playwrights, not counting those who wrote books for musicals. Last season the "name" playwrights presenting new work were Larry Gelbart, David Hare, Tom Stoppard (with a radio play from 1972 on stage for the first time), August Wilson, A. R. Gurney, and Peter Shaffer. As of January 1, a time when the season is usually at its peak, only five legit dramas were playing on Broadway—three held over from last season and two survivors from among the scant four that opened last fall, one of them at Lincoln Center, which is a "Broadway" theater only by a legal fiction.

The steep decline since 1967–1968 represents but a portion of a longer-term downward trend. Throughout his book Goldman lamented the diminished state of the theater in *his* time. There were 264 new productions in the 1927–1928 season and 187 three years later, after the double whammy of the Depression and talkies; there were sixty in 1940–1941. The sixties brought a mild up-



surge, but, as Brooks Atkinson lamented in his historical account *Broadway* (1970), "in the seventies there was a surplus of theaters all through the year. Most theaters were dark during long periods. . . . Herman Levin, producer of the legendary *My Fair Lady*, believes that the day is not too distant when ten theaters will be enough." Levin may prove to have been an optimist.

An Uninviting Avenue

THERE ARE MANY reasons for this situation, but the main one has nothing directly to do with the theater. Manhattan, long regarded as a nice place to visit but not to live, is becoming useless for either

purpose. On September 3 of last year this was dramatized with a vividness that no Broadway playwright has achieved in the past many seasons, when a "gang of ritualistic muggers" (to quote a headline in *The New York Times*) killed a twenty-two-year-old Utah tourist, Brian Watkins, as he tried to defend his mother from their attack. And why do you suppose the gang (called FTS, an acronym for Fuck That Shit) was down in the subway mugging tourists? Not to get money for crack, no. They wanted to go dancing at Roseland, where many of them were later arrested as they exited at closing time.

The story is a natural for a full-scale Broadway musical. It would open at FTS headquarters, in Flushing, where the gang leader, Rocstar, is explaining in a rap song to two new recruits that to be initiated into FTS they must mug someone that night. Cut to the Watkins family in front of a traditional bright-lights-along-the-Great-White-Way backdrop as they sing a medley of standards in praise of Broadway. Then the mugging, performed as a slow-motion duet for Rocstar and Brian. Finally the big Hip-Hop Ballet in Roseland, as the gang members, exhilarated by their kill, vie to see who is the most spectacular dancer. The young murderer's friends told the *Times* that Rocstar had a special talent for graffiti, so there is the possibility of a dance solo for Rocstar in which he would declare his love for the ingenue (another Big-Apple-loving Utahan, whom he's met only that night, at Roseland) in tragic eight-foot letters just before the cops arrive.

Some may object that such a scenario is in questionable taste, offensive to victims and assaulters alike. One

of the more refined cruelties of living in New York City is that it is considered bad form openly to excoriate minority public enemies like the members of FTS. Yet it is impossible to speak of the problems of the Broadway neighborhood without mentioning what all visitors immediately notice: its streets have become a gauntlet of sinister and sleazy pushers, hookers, panhandlers, mad derelicts, wristwatch con artists, and small, silent clusters of youths who look like recruiting material for FTS. Where there were once nightclubs and restaurants catering to theatergoers, there are head shops and pizza parlors of surpassing grunginess. The very Roseland where FTS members held their victory celebration was for decades a ballroom frequented by the same fuddy-duddies who could be counted on to fill the now darkened theaters.

I came to New York City in 1957, after daydreaming about Gotham all through my high school years in Minnesota, and landed a job checking hats and selling orange juice at the Majestic Theater through most of the runs of *The Music Man* and *Camelot*. I had no theatrical ambitions myself; I just wanted an address at the center of the universe. The Broadway I became acquainted with corresponded at most points with the myth that had brought me there. My boss at the Majestic, Arthur Gross, might have stepped out of a Damon Runyon story, with his gravelly dese-dem-dose accent and a belief in his destined luck at the racetrack which no losses could dampen. My fellow orange-juice vendors had a similarly quixotic faith that they were Broadway bound, and a few did eventually land jobs in the chorus lines of musicals.

The neighborhood was filled with such now vanished lower-middle-class amenities as cafeterias and automats and bars that actually provided a free lunch of sorts for the price (fifteen cents) of a glass of beer. Forty-second Street, whose scuzziness has by now proved so intractable that it is slated for bulldozing as a last cosmetic resort, was then a benign honky-tonk of movie houses that played second-run double features until the wee hours. The teenage gangs of that era had made only a symbolic beachhead on Broadway, as the Jets and Sharks in the Bernstein and Sondheim *West Side Story* of 1957. Homelessness, similarly, was the theme of a musical comedy, *Subways Are for Sleeping*, in 1961, long before it became a permanent feature of the landscape. (In fact, the cheapest movie houses on Forty-second Street specialized in movies so old and dull that only winos would pay the thirty-five-cent admission charge, and thus provided the city with large de facto dormitories.)

The Times Square venues that I knew as a checkroom attendant earning \$32 a week were, needless to say, the very meanest socio-economic niche. The audiences whose coats and hats I checked set the general tone of the area, which was one of middle-class mass-market glitz: Schrafft's, Howard Johnson's, Childs. A rung up from those were Sardi's, Gallagher's, the Stork Club. Now, in the era of \$60 tickets (more if you buy from

scalpers), it is only the upper end of the spectrum that still, tenuously, survives. As with housing in New York City, there is little provision for middle-class, middle-income needs. In the fifties and early sixties Broadway shows were one of the city's basic amenities, available even to those (and they were a majority in the Majestic balcony) who hesitated before they splurged on a thirty-five-cent half-pint carton of orange juice. Now, except among the rich, a night on the town has become a once-a-year extravagance, a fact reflected in the strength of Broadway musicals relative to plays. Last season musicals accounted for 67 percent of attendance and 75 percent of gross receipts. After all, people can see actors on TV any night of the week; they can read a good story. When they go to the theater, they want a lavish production, visible millions, their money's worth.

A Changed Context

AS A LATTER-DAY IRVING BERLIN MIGHT OBSERVE, there's no industry like the entertainment industry. None, certainly, likely to yield such a small return on the money invested. Consider the fate of *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, the most expensive show in Broadway history and the winner of six Tony awards. After a run of less than two years, and while it was still playing to 90 percent capacity (more than 10,000 people a week), it closed, having earned only \$4.8 million of its \$8.8 million cost. Its weekly expenses were so high and its profit margin so slim that its producers decided to take a scaled-down version on the road and to Japan while the show was still relatively fresh. The Robbins show epitomizes the current desperate situation of Broadway not just in terms of profit and loss but in its essence as well. It's an anthology of show-stopping moments of the kind that just don't happen on Broadway anymore, except in revivals. Three of the excerpted shows—*Gypsy*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Peter Pan*—were also revived last year; two have already closed.

How do theater people themselves account for the quick failure of many shows and the probability that the rest will be unprofitable? Usually they blame the messenger—that is, the *New York Times* theater critic, Frank Rich, who reviews almost all Broadway shows and most other major theatrical events in the city. When Rich pans a show and it flops, he is always ready to hand as a scapegoat. Last November the English playwright David Hare's fulminations against Rich's review of Hare's *The Secret Rapture* earned banner headlines in *Variety*. Hare kvetched, "There is an unmistakable personal nastiness in what [Rich] writes, a series of *ad hominem* attacks that seem unmotivated by what he has seen on the stage but by some personal bitterness about artists." Hare's outrage strikes me as a classic instance of denial and of the sense of entitlement common to artists who have waxed fat on subsidies. I thought Rich was too kind to the play.

But Rich does in fact exercise a life-or-death power over most plays, despite his disingenuous insistence that it is producers who close shows, not his reviews. His raves have helped such minor-league works as *Eastern Standard*, *Mastergate*, and *Once on This Island* win transfers out of pre-Broadway venues, while his pans in just this past season sank not only Hare's play but also *Accomplice*, *The Cemetery Club*, and a revival of Paddy Chayefsky's *The Tenth Man*. These three victims were all, on the face of it, likely survivors, filling niches (thriller, sentimental comedy, Jewish high-minded drama) otherwise unoccupied at the time they opened. *Accomplice* was an ingeniously plotted comic murder mystery in the vein of *Deathtrap*, which Rich found "incomprehensible." Rich dismissed *The Cemetery Club*, a benign, formulaic comedy about Jewish widows in Queens, as "'Golden Girls' at four times the length but with at most one-fourth the star wattage," and "one of the best arguments yet advanced

for cremation." He was acerbic about the Lincoln Center production of *The Tenth Man*, Chayefsky's most successful play, and dismissive of Somerset Maugham as a playwright in reviewing a revival of *The Circle*, but that show survived by sheer star power, in the shape of Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, and Stewart Granger. One would have to be an intrepid producer to mount further revivals of Maugham while Rich remains the *Times*'s sole Broadway critic. As for the living playwrights Rich has hexed, what can they do but bewail their fate, like Hare, and resign themselves to writing for Off Broadway and regional theaters?

As *The Nation*'s reviewer, I have seen the same plays that Rich has seen for the past three seasons, and while I have usually been better disposed toward the "well-made" plays Rich tends to pan, I think Rich's tastes are more congruent with the expectations of actual Broadway audiences than are my own. His slighting comparison of

IN THE GAME

From deep left field I watch the hitter.
Then, bored, I watch a hawk, tip feathers
adjusting as he hunts. Air jolts.
The shocked ground jars. Flatcars jerk past
slowly. From underneath thick nets,
tank turrets aim past our playing field.
Behind them, splotched with camouflage,
heavy artillery trundles toward us.
I turn, gawk, awed by the huge green weapons.
Awed too by my surprise, as if
I had, in fear, forgotten all
the necessary violences
that let us play our game. Behind me
my brother yells, "Get in the game!"
It's late. I think we're two runs down.
Mike charges a weak grounder, whips
the ball to first. Out three, thank God.
As I jog in across the parched
infield, the slow train churns the air
explosively, and I remember when
my brother ran home from a ballgame
and fell on the front lawn, heat-struck.
He thrashed and beat the hot air till
I leapt across his chest. He gagged,
then yelled, *Don't let me hurt you! Don't
let me hurt anyone!* A wild
blow clipped my cheek and, shit, I slammed
my fist—twice, hard—into his ribs.

We fought till Momma turned the hose on us.
Hard streams of water stung our eyes.
Mike pushed himself free, walked, embarrassed,
back to the house. He has, of course,
hurt others—as I, by telling this,
hurt him again to help myself
toward understanding, a vicious truth
and one I cannot do without
though I don't care to think about it,
like this slow military train
that jolts into the distance. Green, tan,
and olive splotches blend with pines,
invisible. I cannot tell
exactly where they merge, become
the same thing. Natural and unnatural—
I used to be so sure which one
was which. The umpire calls strike one
while I stand stupid, thinking. But then
I bear down, double to right. Mike tears
past third at a dead run, slides hard
and sends the catcher sprawling. All right!
The catcher yells, Mike yells back, shoves.
I edge off second, feint, and try
to judge the steal. We're one behind,
with one man, me, on base.

—Andrew Hudgins

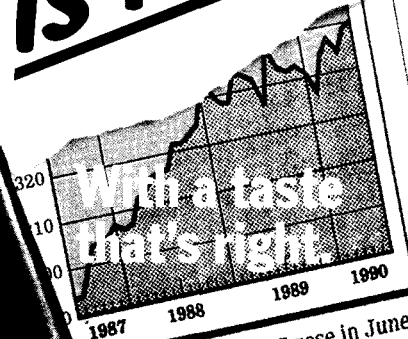
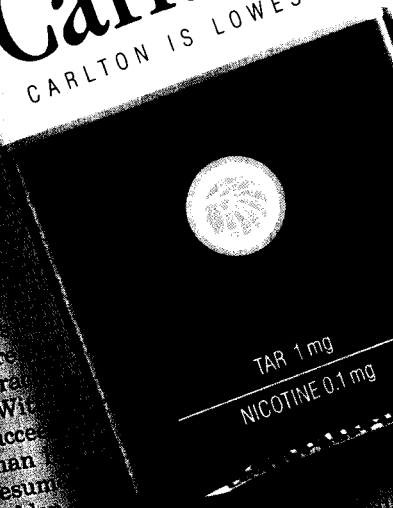
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The Cemetery Club to *The Golden Girls* isn't off target. The latter is one of the best-scripted TV sitcoms since *Taxi*, and few sentimental comedies on stage in recent years have been as amusing. If audiences insist that what they see in the theater must be of another magnitude altogether than the best things available on TV, then Broadway had better just scrap the genre of sentimental comedy altogether. And so, by and large, it has. The most notable successes in that vein—*Steel Magnolias* and *Driving Miss Daisy*—had long runs Off Broadway, where a show can survive if it sells in a week what most Broadway houses have to pull in every night. Both shows went on to become popular movies. Yet they would probably have fared no better than *The Cemetery Club* on Broadway, where sitcom wholesomeness has little box-office appeal, even among those who enjoy it in other contexts. Who goes to the Four Seasons for a hot dog?

It is the same with a thriller like *Accomplice* (despite a set—incorporating an operational mill wheel—that offered the kind of conspicuous expense unavailable in smaller theaters), with a “serious” or writerly drama like last season's *The Lisbon Traviata*, and with most revivals, from Shakespeare to Arthur Miller. For such plays Off Broadway is a more natural venue. A larger set in exchange for being three times as far away from the actors is a poor trade-off. The chance to see Dustin Hoffman play Shylock or Kathleen Turner play Maggie the Cat is not worth double the price of admission to see a noncelebrity actor in a more freewheeling performance any night of the week.

Broadway has become a tourist attraction, New York City's dilapidated and inadequate response to Disney World. Most native New Yorkers have come to regard it as they do the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty—a place one goes to, if at all, only with out-of-town visitors. A friend of mine who works in the city courts and used to take in three or four Broadway shows a year with his wife is typical of many: he has decided that two hours of live entertainment simply isn't worth the price of tickets and a risky subway ride into the heart of the city's darkness. And this is a man who used to be a Transit Authority cop.

The reason that Broadway appeals less to New Yorkers these days isn't just that Broadway has changed: so have New Yorkers. Middle-class flight to the suburbs and subsequent inner-city decay have not yet reached the proportions in Manhattan that they have in Detroit or Philadelphia (or in Brooklyn or the Bronx, for that matter), but even so these are basic demographic facts of life. Some of the émigrés to the suburbs still work in the city and constitute, probably, a moiety of the vanishing breed of “regular” theatergoers. But a glance around the lobby at any Broadway show reveals who *isn't* there: any of the city's readily identifiable minorities—blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and the young.

It isn't just the expense; it's the fact that New Yorkers no longer have a common culture. The melting pot has been replaced by a mosaic, the separate components of which regard one another with apathy or contempt. Allegories of neighborliness like *Abie's Irish Rose* and *West Side Story* are passé. When blacks appear on Broadway, as they have recently in August Wilson's dramas or musicals like *Black and Blue* and *Once on This Island*, it is usually in an all-black production performed for predominantly white audiences (though *Black and Blue* is the particular favorite of Japanese tourists). Only one play now on Broadway proper, *Prelude to a Kiss*, and another at Lincoln Center, *Six Degrees of Separation*, can be said to mirror contemporary urban reality—or fantasy, for that matter.

In his recent comedy, *The Cocktail Hour*, A. R. Gurney drew a vivid portrait of a middle-class couple from the older generation, who loved to go to the kind of Broadway plays that Lunt and Fontanne starred in—plays about smart, sophisticated tipplers having romantic adventures amid nice furniture. No American playwright in our time has a better handle on the WASP milieu; few are as funny, none more skilled in basic carpentry. Yet *The Cocktail Hour*, like most of Gurney's plays, had an Off-Broadway run. A significant exception was *Love Letters*, a play requiring only two actors and no set. An additional selling point was that since the actors *read* their lines, anyone could perform the play with a week's rehearsal or less, and so it was a play that any currently unemployed pair of actors could perform in any currently darkened theater.

A Break in the Supply

MORE AND MORE, BROADWAY THEATERS HAVE tried to keep their marquees lit by offering evening-long monologues (*Tru*) and solo recitals, as well as two-handers like *Love Letters*. This trend has not been limited to Broadway. Two- and three-character plays have abounded at resident theater companies across the country in the past season. Regional theaters have also become uncommonly attentive to that part of theatrical heritage that is in the public domain. In Minneapolis the Guthrie Theater offered a season of five plays by Shakespeare, one by Euripides, *The Front Page* (1928), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), and, inevitably, *A Christmas Carol*. At the Actors Theatre of Louisville, long noted for its premieres of new plays, five of seven forthcoming productions are of works more than twenty-five years old. Since Broadway has become accustomed to having regional theaters do much of the work of development, this trend will represent a significant rupture in the pipeline in the years ahead.

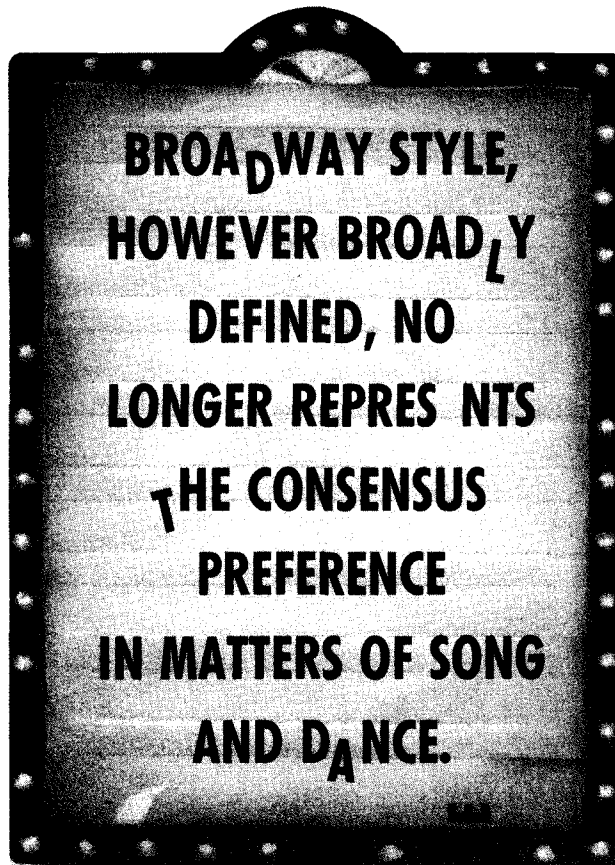
Supply and demand does not operate in the theater as it does in classical economic theory. Writers, perceiving an abundance of dark theaters, will not consider this an opportunity to write new plays to augment a dwindling

supply. Universities—and the world at large—are filled with people aspiring to be writers, and for almost all of them that means writing novels, since the likelihood of publishing one's first novel is many times greater than that of having a first play produced. The likelihood of earning a living as a novelist, slim as it is, is also much greater than that of doing so as a playwright. Accordingly, apprentice writers with a shred of sense try to develop their novel-writing muscles first. Some writers, of course, lack that much sense, or have a natural flair for the theater, and a few are able to buck the odds and get produced.

But even for those few there is Hollywood and the vast talent-gobbling maw of television. In the TV era it has come to be understood that the stage is only a stepping-stone to Hollywood. Playwriting has become the larval stage of a screenwriter's career, the mere grubby precondition of butterfly success. And rarely do those who have gone west continue to write for the Broadway stage, Neil Simon and David Mamet being notable exceptions.

Who, then, does write plays nowadays? A canny few playwrights like Israel Horowitz and the late Charles Ludlam have managed to create their own little Bayreuths, where they have been able to produce and direct their work without constantly seeking new or renewed funding. The luckiest have a comfortable relationship with one of the established regional or Off-Broadway venues that can serve (when fueled by a rave from Frank Rich) as a launching pad to Broadway: Lanford Wilson at Circle Rep, August Wilson at Yale, David Rabe at the Public Theater. More commonly, however, playwrights of a literary bent produce work with no expectation of a Broadway production. Often they represent a minority sensibility—gay, feminist, black—in a combative mood: Christopher Durang, Megan Terry, and Charles Fuller are examples.

Indeed, what most non-Broadway playwrights have in common is contentiousness. They remain children of the counterculture, with the bad manners and chip-bearing shoulders common to that breed. They don't attend the Broadway theater, they don't write for it, and they are almost unanimous in seeing Broadway as facing extinction—even those who, by a fluke, have been produced



there. Marsha Norman, who wrote *'night, Mother*, declares Broadway to be "virtually closed for serious drama." Stephen Sondheim observes that "a whole generation and a half has grown up without the theatregoing habit," and that "much of the middle class that used to support the theater can't afford it anymore." Lanford Wilson grouses, "I don't think there have been more than two good plays on Broadway since '62."

Equally dire pronouncements about Broadway and the future of theater in general have been made by Christopher Durang, John Guare, Michael Weller, and, indeed, virtually all the other seventeen contributors to *In Their Own Words*, the anthology of interviews with

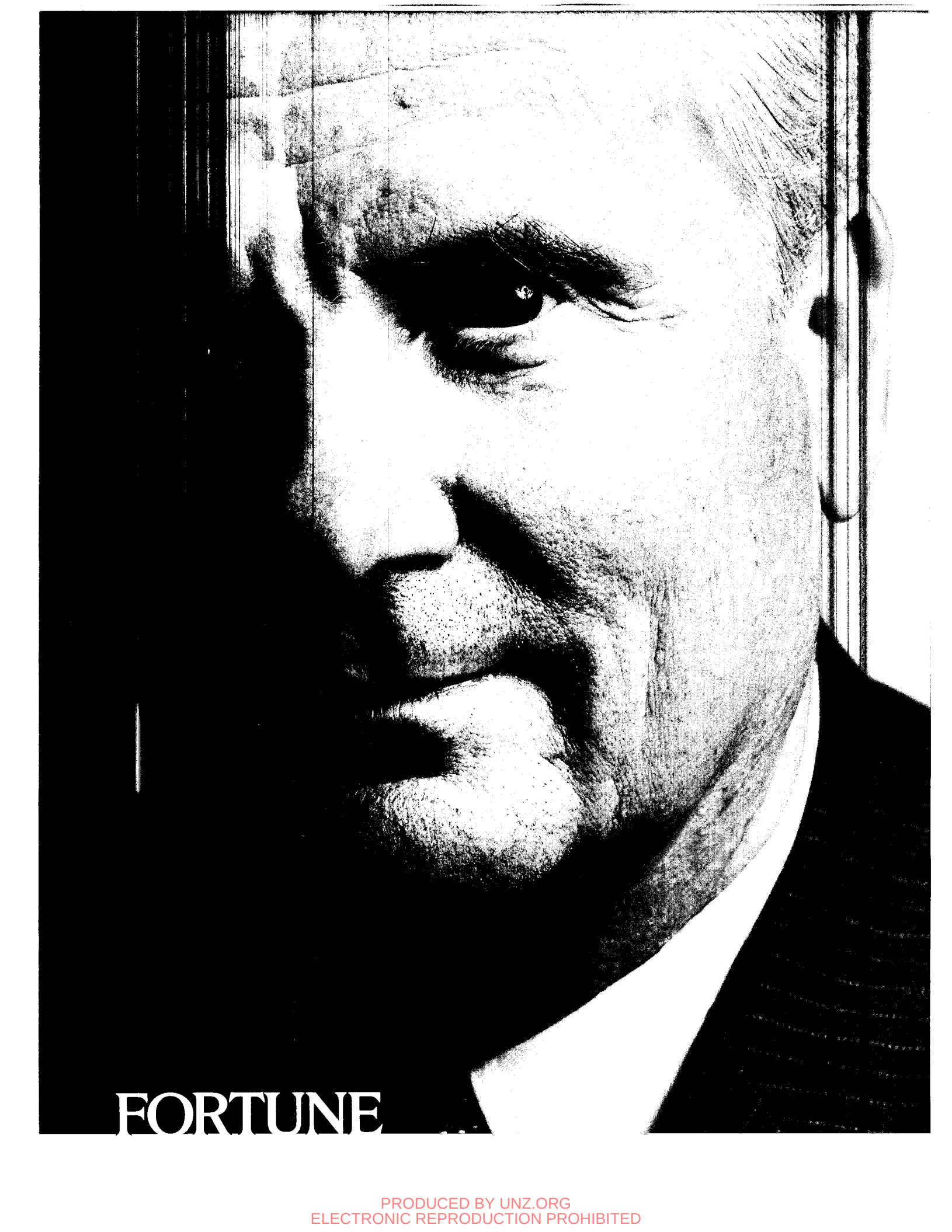
American playwrights from which the quotations above were extracted. The only cheery view of the situation comes from David Mamet, who declares,

I think it's a great time to be a young person in the theatre. All bets are off, as in such times of social upheaval as the twenties in Germany, the sixties in Chicago, the period from 1898 to 1920 in Russia. . . . I think we're going to start putting people in jail again for what they write. People have been subconsciously afraid of expressing themselves because the times are so tenuous. And the reality will follow that feeling. So that will be exciting.

Maybe, but one thing is sure—the excitement won't be on Broadway.

Everybody's a Playwright

IT ISN'T ONLY CAUTIOUS, PANDERING PRODUCERS who are the enemies of playwrights, however. In their own way, directors and actors have an ageless and unassuageable grudge against the tyranny of the text. In the film industry the director has long been considered the No. 1 Artist, the *auteur*, while the star has the most box-office clout. In Hollywood, notoriously, the script has always been a mutable thing. But in the theater authors once had more authority. Even dead authors' printed texts were too famous to be seriously tampered with. Directors were in charge of the actors' performances and coordinated the decorative aspects of a production—sets, costumes, music. But they



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change their minds.”

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were bound to follow the story line as a train must follow its tracks.

Gradually that changed. The examples both of Hollywood and of musical comedy (where the book has usually been a negligible part of the production) emboldened directors to assert their own artistic claims. Elia Kazan forced rewrites from Tennessee Williams that turned his plots around 180 degrees. Bob Fosse managed to turn Stephen Schwartz's *Pippin* from the sentimental celebration of innocence and idealism that the author thought he had written into a glitzkrieg that reflected his own obsessed hedonism—and audiences loved it. The show ran four and a half years. Finally, Fosse's *auteur* instincts produced the film *All That Jazz*, the story of his life co-authored by an obscure writer willing to stroke Fosse's ego.

Actors resent the authority of writers no less than directors do. They have special cause, having to mouth the same words night after night until they must feel like puppets. They know that a scene's success, even a play's, often depends on their delivery rather than on what is being delivered. In retrospect it seems almost inevitable that actors and directors would band together to subvert the tyranny of the text. Plays under the baton of Judith Malina, of the Living Theater, or Jean-Claude van Itallie, of the Open Theater, or Richard Schechner, of the Performance Group, became communal creations in which each actor did his own thing. At first, during the sixties and early seventies, the results were often exciting. But as the novelty wore off, the excitement diminished and jelled into a new avant-garde orthodoxy that dispenses not only with authorship but also with narrative, coherence, linearity, and anything like human interest. Richard Foreman and the Wooster Group have been the chief exponents of this style, but it recently reached its apotheosis in Martha Clarke's million-dollar fiasco, *Endangered Species*, a spectacle that sought to make a large statement about animal oppression, racial domination, the Holocaust, the Civil War, and the tyranny of love, using no text but lines cobbled together from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. This state of affairs was dictated not by Clarke's artistic vision but by a dispute over whether the intended author, Charles Mee, would receive equal billing with her. Clarke refused, Mee stood his ground, and the result was a mishmash of grandiose good intentions that starred a circus elephant. Elephants are impressive animals, but in the theater writers may still be more essential.

Martha Clarke is not a Broadway impresario, though her budgets tend to make her look like one. Nor is there any threat that Off Broadway's war against the written word will establish a beachhead on Times Square anytime soon. But if the largest budgets are reserved for the inchoate visions of the most ambitious directors, that is one more reason for playwrights to write plays on a small scale or not at all.

Not Much to Sing About

LET US SUPPOSE THAT LEGITIMATE THEATER IS A lost cause on Broadway, except for a few ever-more-retro revivals each season. Doesn't that still leave the musical as a living art form? I think not, and for parallel reasons—the dwindling supply of talent and the disparity between what producers can offer and what consumers want.

To begin with the supply side of the equation, a paucity of opportunities dictates fewer apprenticeship positions. The entertainment industry has, however, been aware of the need to provide some seed money for research and development, and so there are a few institutions that encourage fledgling composers and lyricists to learn their craft. In the course of three years of reviewing I have seen a fair number of the resulting musical comedies, both in New York and out of town, one of which, *Once on This Island*, recently graduated to Broadway (thanks to a rave from Frank Rich). I thought that this "calypso" musical was bologna on white bread, an innocuous minstrel show put on by an all-black cast and an all-white creative team. It was subsidized by AT&T and showcased at Playwrights Horizons. At about the same time, *A Change in the Heir*, by another team of hopefuls, opened on Broadway, having been developed at the New Tunes Theatre, in Chicago. It fell just short of legendary awfulness. And those two were probably the best of the neophyte musicals I've seen.

The talent isn't there anymore, or isn't visible, and the only musicals that have lately made any sort of mark on Broadway bear this out. Last season's musical successes were a revival of *Gypsy*; *City of Angels*, with a score by Cy Coleman, who has been writing hit musicals for thirty years; *Grand Hotel*, with a resuscitated score from Robert Wright and George Forrest, who did *Song of Norway* and *Kismet* (the score was fortified by a few solid songs by Maury Yeston); and *Aspects of Love*, by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the English composer, who has two other musicals currently running. This season brought revivals of *Oh, Kay!* (1926), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), and *Peter Pan* (1954); a revue of Yiddish musical-theater favorites; and an homage to Buddy Holly.

If Broadway's musical menu is beginning to be almost as antiquarian as the Metropolitan Opera's, the reasons are no further away than your radio and your cable-TV screen. Broadway style, however broadly defined, no longer represents the consensus preference in matters of song and dance. While a few efforts have been made to come to terms with rock-and-roll (the best, *Grease* and *Little Shop of Horrors*, were Off-Broadway shows), by and large Broadway composers go for wit, romance, schmaltz, and the tempos of ballroom dancing. The current Tommy Tune hit *Grand Hotel* is a state-of-the-art example of what can still be done, but surely it is significant that the show is set in 1928, and that its two best dance numbers

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are a Charleston and a bolero, which are, respectively, show-stopping and heart-stopping.

Or so they seemed to this fifty-year-old, who started seeing musicals at movie theaters in the early 1950s, when the movies regularly reproduced Broadway hits. However, when I talked recently to a class of college freshmen at the School of Visual Arts, twelve of whom had just seen *Grand Hotel*, I was pained to discover that only one student would admit to having liked it. The others thought the songs "dull" or "phony," and found the alternation between speech and song off-putting. In short, they disliked the *idea* of musical comedy, and indeed, when I asked them to name a musical that they had liked, I got mostly blank looks. I might as well have asked them who was their favorite Puritan divine.

The one transformation that musicals have made to adapt to these changing tastes is represented by the work of Andrew Lloyd Webber and of the French team of Boublil and Schönberg, the creators of *Les Misérables* and the forthcoming *Miss Saigon*. Their recipe is to move musical comedy in the direction of opera by reducing the comedy component to near zero, replacing ordinary speech with recitative, so as to promote a continuous musical flow, and providing large dollops of spectacle. It also helps to have elements of religious (*Jesus Christ Superstar*) or political (*Evita*, *Les Misérables*) uplift, in order to reassure audiences that they're not frittering away their money on mere entertainment.

So far, no Americans have managed to produce musicals in this new vein. The one edge that Broadway still has on the English and French invaders is dancing, and the best indigenous hits of the past ten years have been revues and revivals that showcase great dancing, such as *Black and Blue*, *42nd Street*, and *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*. But the days of great dancing are also numbered, because choreographers are, literally, a dying breed. Gower Champion died the day his *42nd Street* opened; Bob Fosse died in 1987, having already choreographed the occasion in *All That Jazz*; Michael Bennett, of *A Chorus Line* and *Dreamgirls*, died the same year. Jerome Robbins has semi-retired. Of all the choreographer-directors of the first rank, only Tommy Tune is still active.

Bennett died of AIDS. No single group in the New York art world has been harder hit by the AIDS epidemic than dancers and choreographers, and this cannot help having an effect on what producers are able to produce. There are not so very many first-class talents in the field that we can expect the gaps in the ranks to continue to be filled by new recruits year after year, as in a Civil War army. There is no way to measure what will never happen, or what might have been had so many not died or become too ill or despairing to work. Lesley Farlow, a dance specialist in New York City, has initiated an oral-history project for the dance collection of the New York

Public Library, taping the testimony of dancers and choreographers stricken with AIDS. Probably no one has a better grasp of the overall situation than Farlow, and she says that hundreds and hundreds of prominent dance-world figures have died AIDS-related deaths.

A Very Few Remedies

FEW OF THE PROBLEMS FACING BROADWAY ARE within the scope of the entertainment industry to remedy. Ticket prices might be scaled back, and in fact there is a new scheme afoot to supplement the existing last-minute-discount TKTS office in Times Square with a more extensive operation, called STAR*TIX, in Grand Central Terminal. Another scheme is the Broadway Alliance, an agreement among producers, unions, and theater owners to make three Broadway theaters available for plays with budgets of less than \$400,000 (that is, not musicals), for which ticket prices can be reduced to \$24, \$19, and \$10, thanks to financial concessions by all parties. If the scheme succeeds, perhaps it could be extended to more than three theaters; at least a dozen are dark most of the time.

The problem of Times Square's squalor is of another magnitude, one that requires solutions on the scale on which Robert Moses worked. Indeed, bulldozers are poised to begin a Moses-style effort that will entail leveling Forty-second Street and several blocks around, and replacing all the local low-life with high-rise office towers and a convention center. Already, new hotels have gone up in the area, their acres of lobbies and restaurants serving as a kind of middle-class bastion from which tourist-hunting muggers can legally be excluded, as they cannot be from the streets. The imminent battle between developers who would like to create protected environments and civil libertarians who fear the creation of a two-tiered city with high-safety precincts accessed by credit cards will probably eventually be fought in court—assuming that the urban engineers have the funding to begin building such a safe new world.

The city's latest budget crunch makes this seem a less likely assumption than that the slide into old-fashioned urban decay will continue. Perhaps the middle class will abandon Manhattan altogether, and the Great White Way can repeat the history of Forty-second Street on a larger scale, converting to the MTV generation's equivalent of burlesque and vaudeville—raunchy popular entertainment at low prices for mass audiences. Out-of-towners could come in busloads and see it on chaperoned tours, the way the French and the Japanese now tour Harlem. But probably the future holds a combination of the two—a state-financed last bastion in a sea of picturesque, life-threatening sleaze. Which is to say, just what we've got now, only more so. □



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ALEXANDER FLEMING AND MARLENE DIETRICH

ON A DAY IN 1928 that was not unlike any other, a spore drifted in the open window of Alexander Fleming's laboratory at St. Mary's Hospital, London, and landed in a petri dish containing a culture of staphylococci. In time mold growth from the spore dissolved the staphylococci. This startling development impelled Fleming—ever attuned to the habits of his microbes—to new experimentation, from which emerged the identification of penicillin. Its later production as an antibiotic came just in time to save the lives of thousands of soldiers in the Second World War.

Marlene Dietrich witnessed its success firsthand. The glamorous German-born émigré to Hollywood spent the last year of the war at the European front, singing for the GIs. What she observed in field hospitals elevated Fleming to hero status in her eyes. If she could but see him . . . , she mentioned to the songwriter Mischa Spoliansky, in London, some five years later. Nothing easier, he replied. A small dinner party could be arranged

—she had only to prepare the meal. Dietrich was delighted; she liked nothing better than to watch people she loved eat what she cooked. She wired her friend Erich Maria Remarque in New York for advice as to wines.

Fleming arrived at the Spolianskys' promptly at eight. That this dour Scot was no conversationalist became distressingly apparent over dinner. Dietrich determined to avoid the subject of penicillin, and found herself groping for alternatives. The lovingly prepared food, the carefully selected wines, were consumed by him without comment. Not until they were afterward settled in the living room did everyone relax. Talk turned to Spoliansky's songs: Fleming hummed a few bars from "Tonight or Never." Perhaps, Dietrich thought, the evening had not been a failure after all. But she was not sure until Fleming, reaching into the pocket of his jacket, blurted out, "That's the only thing I thought I could give you: the first penicillin culture," and thrust a tiny round glass jar into her hand.

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

THE
INQUISITIVE TRAVELER'S

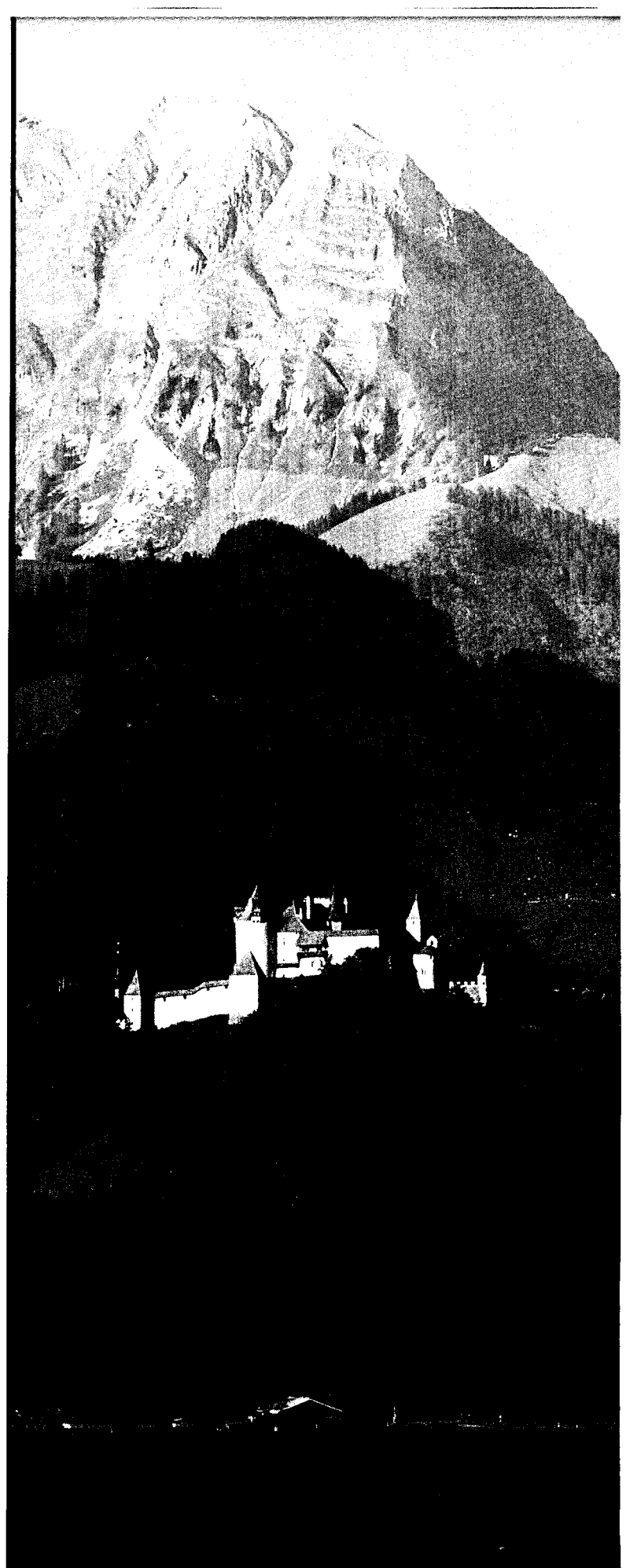
WESTERN EUROPE

A grand tour for the senses

WHEN THEY BUILD MY PARADISE, IT WILL have the fragrance of the citrus trees from the streets of Córdoba, the misty sound of distant cowbells across an Alpine valley, and the aura of the summer skies over Helsinki, still light an hour before midnight, casting a glow that turns solid sandstone façades to pastel powder. Forests, lakes, and seashores will stretch as far as the eye can see; wildlife will flourish. Towns and cities will preserve and honor their distinctive historic architecture. There will be no skyscrapers, no traffic jams, no urban sprawl. The table will be set with the delicacies of Emilia-Romagna and the beds made with the crisp white sheets of the Low Countries. Sometimes I think that heaven actually is Europe, with the cares of real life swept away. Maybe that is why the Europe we know always sharpens the senses. Through reacquaintance and

BY MATTHEW
GUREWITSCH

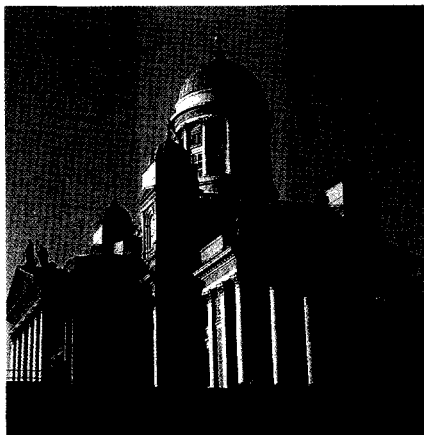
new discovery, each visit enriches the memory's trove of singular impressions.



SIGHTS

"**A** LOOK AT THE SIGHTS," AS TOUR guides call them, is just a beginning; the deeper magic must unfold at leisure, over time. What traveler in Edinburgh will miss the Castle, commanding the promontory above the central green? And indeed, why not spend an hour traversing the centuries: climbing the battlements, looking in on St. Margaret's spare, tiny chapel (built in 1076), discovering in the mock-Gothic stained glass of the Scottish National War Memorial the machines of five decades ago. But the greater fascination is in the entire complex. Viewed as one strolls up and down Princes Street under the maritime cloudscapes, it changes aspect as holy mountains do, now flat, now massive, now lowering, now serene.

In landlocked Granada, a like magic transforms the Alhambra. To the west loom the giant blocks of the Alcazaba,



The Helsinki Cathedral bathed in sunlight

prehistoric in feeling, a stronghold for giants. In the central section, under honeycombed vaults, the princely chambers perpetuate the splendor of *The Arabian Nights*. And to the east, on the far side of a plunging ravine, extend the gardens of the Generalife, where water bubbles into basins hollowed out of the rock steps that climb the shaded hills. To see the Alhambra, you must see it twice: by day, for its variety and sweep, and by night, for the unearthly

weightlessness of the central rooms, whose ceilings hover in the soft illumination like ghostly canopies in midair. Check the almanac for a full moon.

One visual hunger, though, that such vast monuments cannot satisfy is for the personal, more intense and collected beauty of the work of an individual genius. For that, palaces and churches are one answer. The supreme visions of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel—newly revealed in their intoxicating, ancient hues—are on everyone's itinerary. Tiepolo's refulgent *Apollo and the Continents*—unfurled across the vast ceiling of the grand staircase of the Residenz in Würzburg—deserves to be also.

And then there are the museums. Some, chockablock with marvels, would be worth a pilgrimage for one work alone: the Louvre, in Paris, for the romantic agony of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*; the Prado, in Madrid, for *Las Meninas*, wherein Velázquez renders a private moment from the court of Spain's Philip IV at once intimate

OPEN WATERS

The Elbe River flows through what is the heart of Germany once again. Virtually inaccessible to travelers during the post-war years because of border restrictions, the river can now be traveled freely. Two companies, Europamerica Cruises and KD River Cruises of Europe, offer a variety of short cruises, most originating in Hamburg. The ships call at such ports as historic Wittenberg; Meissen, known for its porcelain; and Dresden, where the Elbe meanders past the Semper Opera House, the site of many premieres of works by Strauss and Wagner. Europamerica (800-221-1666) will begin sailing in March, KD River Cruises (800-346-6525) in May.



TRANSPORTS OF ECSTASY

"Switzerland comes close to being a train travelers' paradise," says Jay Brunhouse, author of *Adventuring on the Eurail Express* (Pelican, \$11.95). "The Glacier Express, from Chur to Zermatt, gives a whole panorama of Switzerland

from one end to the other—a wonderful trip."

• George Drury, author of *The Railfan Guide to Switzerland* (Forsyth Travel Library, 800-367-7984, \$8.95), extols the trip from Bern to Brig: "The descent to Brig is particularly spectacular. The train uses the same angle and pattern a DC-3 would use." • George Ferguson, co-author of *Europe by Eurail* (Globe Pequot, \$13.95), recommends the "vista-dome" trains of the Panoramic Express, to Montreux via the famed Golden Pass. Be sure to sit on the left, he advises.

IRISH EYES

The opening, in the first week of May, of the new Irish Museum of Modern Art looks to be a high point of Dublin's reign as the European community's "European City of Culture" this year. Others include the 800th anniversary of St. Patrick's Cathedral (March 17, celebrated with a thanksgiving service); the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of the 1916 Rising (March 30 to April 1), featuring the opening of refurbished

1916 rooms at the National Museum; the Dublin Literary Festival (June 16 to 28); and an Irish/American Fourth of July bash. For more information about "Dublin 1991," write or call the Irish Tourist Board, 757 Third Avenue, New York, NY; 212-418-0800.

DAY FOR NIGHT

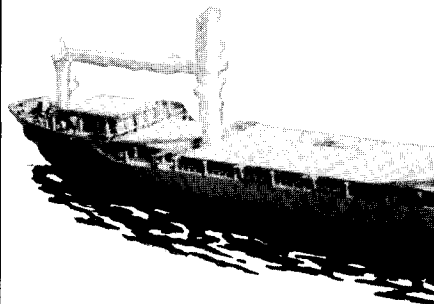
In the city of North Cape, Norway (latitude 71, 4 degrees above the Arctic Circle), the sun does not set from May 22 to July 29, while farther south in Scandinavia, daylight lingers as late as 11 P.M. and begins again as early as 3 A.M.



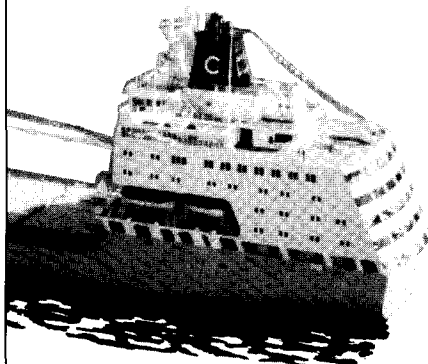
Residents and visitors alike take advantage of this remarkable time of year by traveling, by plane or overnight train, up to the wild northern lands. Many short tours are available that include midnight rafting and fishing, or biking and canoeing excursions. Information on trips of all sorts is available from the Scandinavian Tourist Board, 655 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017; 212-949-2333.

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SOUNDS

ENCORE IN AUSTRIA

Chamber music in palaces, sacred music in churches, operas, ballets, orchestral concerts, congresses, exhibitions.... This year, which brings with it the 200th anniversary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's death, promises to be a multimedia Mozart orgy in both Vienna and Salzburg. Everyone from Vienna's Staatsoper to the Salzburg Marionette Theatre is taking part.



The full programs of events appear in a fat "Mozart Almanac 1991," published by Vienna's tourist board, and a handsome brochure published by Salzburg's. For copies of these or for other information, write or call the Austrian National Tourist Office, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; 212-944-6880.

SOUND INVESTMENT

World-renowned orchestras and soloists are all but lining up to perform at the new 2,200-seat symphony hall in Birmingham, England. The acoustic design, by guru Russell Johnson of New York-based Artec, features a reverberation chamber—the first of its kind in Europe.

Besides Simon Rattle's City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, participants in the hall's first season (May to December) include the Leningrad Philharmonic, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Jessye Norman, and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Jazz and folk musicians are scheduled, too. For more information and tickets, call 021-782-8282.

BELL CANTO

Housed high in church belfries and old public buildings, the carillon—a musical instrument of cup-shaped bells sounded by hammers con-

trolled by a keyboard—produces music of strange beauty and wide appeal. Some renowned carillons: The 250-year-old instrument at Zutphen, Holland, is known for its particularly beautiful tone. The post-World War II carillon at Mechelen, Belgium, has forty-nine bells, the largest of which, a B-flat, weighs eight tons. The largest carillon in Europe, with a phenomenal sixty-eight bells, is in Berlin, in the Tiergarten, just behind the Reichstag.

ECHOES OF SWISS PAST

Yodeling, which began as a means of communication among shepherds on distant Alpine peaks, is still high art in Switzerland. Hear it at several competitions during the current year-long 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation. Hundreds of other events, from concerts for glockenspiel in Geneva to ballet in Basel, are taking place throughout the country. One highlight: the Festival of the Four Cultures, which reaches its peak in Lausanne, June 15 to 30. For more information, call or write the Swiss National Tourist Office, 608 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10020; 212-757-5944.

ON WINGS OF SONG

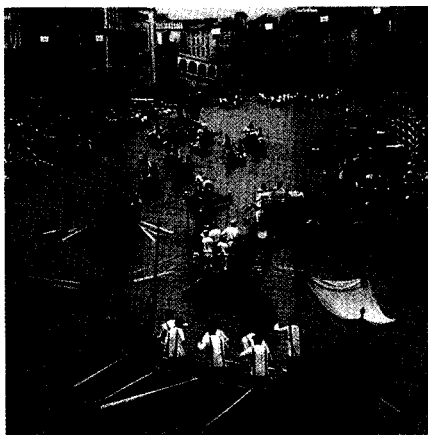


The blackbird, so familiar to us in rhymes and songs from Mother Goose to the Beatles, is nonetheless not found in North America. One must visit Europe—virtually any country will do—to hear the European blackbird's melodious trilling and see the bird itself. Europe has quite a variety of more-exotic bird species and birdsongs to offer, too. For information about bird-watching trips to Europe, write or call the National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022; 212-546-9140.

and hauntingly allegorical; the Glyptothek, in Munich, for the antique Barberini *Faun*, caught in his aching marble slumber; the Mauritshuis, in The Hague, for Vermeer's *View of Delft*, where the quotidian is touched with a scarcely accountable yet incontestable transcendence; the Uffizi, in Florence, for Botticelli's *Primavera*, that sylvan masque of loves sacred and profane. Your list may be different, and in time it may change.

SOUNDS

OF SEDUCTIONS FOR THE EAR there is no end. Return in thought to Granada and hear the babble of the water over the steps of the Generalife. In a more rugged key, the waters of the Rhine gurgle against the rudder of ferry boats that cross from quay to quay in Basel. In the side canals of Venice,



A gondoliers' regatta, in Venice

where the gondoliers' melancholy cries signal around blind corners, the lapping waves only whisper yet are never still.

The length and breadth of Europe, local speech weaves its spell, in languages you know or not. Actors on the London stage imbue our mother tongue with a power and beauty of which we may never have known it capable. Only Finns know Finnish, but the lilt of vowels, pure and shaded, and the light touch of precise consonants, single or doubled, are a joy to hear. German has a huskier melody. And Italian, even in a casual conversation overheard at a bus stop, seems always to hover at the threshold of song.

No wonder that in Italy opera matters as nowhere else. No temple to the operatic muse ranks higher than La Scala, in Milan, where a century ago Verdi introduced the crowning masterpieces of his career. These days, Riccardo Muti conducts Verdi's operas there with a fire-edged reverence unmatched in the world.

Before the downbeat, look around. As history would have it, the La Scala of today is not the theater Verdi knew. The bombs of the last world war obliterated the eighteenth-century original. In the old days, the boxes, rising in five tiers, were private property, and the owners outdid themselves dressing them up in swag and mirrors. A handful of these jewel cases remain, scat-

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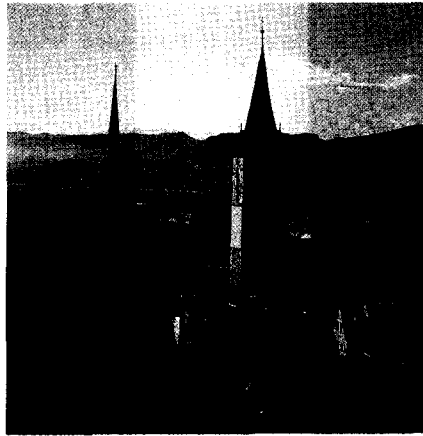
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tered apparently at random. Otherwise the house is a scrupulous replica right up to the painted wooden ceiling, which plays its part in the uniquely theatrical acoustics.

Richard Wagner's Festspielhaus, on the other hand, in the Bavarian town of Bayreuth, was meant to serve only as a temporary pavilion yet stands unaltered after a century and a quarter, with no plans for change. The master got it right the first time: as at La Scala, a key determinant in the success of the house is the presence of wood. Here, it is the floor, which resonates underfoot as if the audience were seated on the sounding board of the world's largest violoncello. Indeed, when the lamps in the auditorium fade to dark for the *Ring* cycle, you can never quite tell whether the double basses' opening low E-flat enters consciousness first as sound or as a vibration through the soles of your shoes. Singers sound their best, too.



Zurich: "dizzying" in the springtime

Jet-age conditions are said to have driven heroic Wagnerian voices to extinction. The blended, forgiving sound of the Festspielhaus suggests that Wagner himself knew few of them. When available, supermen and superwomen make a splendid noise here, but they are not required. This is a house for heroics on a human scale.

SCENTS

IF YOUR NOSE IS SUSCEPTIBLE, Europe's old-style pharmacies can become an addiction. Here, stored with care and art, are herbs and oils refined to essences. With each opening of a hand-labeled wooden drawer and each lifting of a ceramic lid, a burst of odor escapes and flies around retorts and mortars and pestles. What precisely, you wonder, are you detecting here? Gardenia, lilac, musk, sage, linden, cinnamon, chamomile, vanilla—all swirling through heady alcohols and ethers. To take some with you, pick up some herbal teas (all of medicinal value if you want them to be) or hand-milled cakes of soap.

But olfactory pleasures are not only indoors. If you have forgotten (or have never known) how a whole city can

15 Reasons Why There Are



SCENTS

IN FRAGRANTE

A traveler could do worse than simply to follow his nose—a procedure that would lead him infallibly to Great Britain's old-rose and herb gardens. At Mottisfont Abbey Garden, in Hampshire, the grand National Trust collection of old roses can be seen and smelled. Old roses are more fragrant than their newer hybrid cousins, and this collection is tops. Hatfield House, in Hertfordshire, has both old-rose gardens and a decade-old "scented garden," comprising aromatic herbs (camomile, rosemary, and marjoram, among others), scented trees (cherry, beech, and mulberry), and sweet-smelling shrubs (boxwood, yew, and sweetbrier).



The roses and herbs at Sissinghurst Castle Garden, in Kent, have their partisans too. Limewalk Tours (802-864-5720) of Burlington, Vermont, specializes in designing itineraries of noseworthy gardens for travelers. Those in pursuit of fragrant gardens obviously should schedule their trips for the appropriate season, usually early summer.

BLOOMING MAD

Essences distilled in Grasse, a hill town in Provence surrounded by endless fields of flowers, lend their scent to three out of four bottles of perfume sold in the world. Every year the town's three major perfume manufacturers, Galimard, Fragonard, and Molinard, use ten thousand tons of flowers—mostly jasmine, mimosa, and lavender. Each manufacturer offers free guided tours of its factory. (Hotels in the area will make arrangements for you.) The acres of flowers around Grasse lend the air an intoxicating sweetness, a fact that the town celebrates (August 4 this year) with a Jasmine Festival. It goes like this: the fire department douses the assembled crowd with jasmine water while the crowd returns the favor with confetti. A parade follows, in which scantily clad women throw flowers from ornate floats and a lot of marching bands all play at once. The whole sequence of events is repeated three times in a row, for no apparent reason other than the fun of it.

TRACKING DOWN TRUFFLES

The pungent scent and musky sweet flavor of the truffle have intrigued the nose and palate since antiquity. The



Greek and Roman belief in this fungus's aphrodisiac power gave rise to the ancient warning that "those who wish to lead virtuous lives should abstain from truffles." Oddly, abstention never caught on, and France, Italy, and Spain continue to produce truffles with pride. France's Périgord region, home of the world-renowned black truffle, produces the most. Year-round you can visit a truffle museum and farm (open most afternoons) in the town of Sorges. Call or write ahead (in French: La Maison de la Truffe, Ecomusée, 24420 Sorges, France; 53-05-90-11) and the museum will arrange a sniffing excursion with a local *truffier* and his dog or pig. Also ask the museum, or the local tourist bureau, for a list of *table d'hotes*, local farm lunches where generous truffle omelets, *foie gras*, and other famous Périgord delicacies are served.

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TASTES

ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT

"Whenever I go to Europe, I try to stop in the Savoy region, in France, to enjoy my favorite European cheese, the Reblochon—it's soft and flavorful," says Edward Edelman, a cheese importer for thirty-odd years and co-author of what many consider to be the cheese bible, *The Ideal Cheese Book* (HarperCollins, 1986, \$22.95). "Some well-known cheeses exported to the U.S., like Gouda and Edam, are actually commercially produced versions of popular farmers' cheeses and are considered a step down from them in quality," says Edelman. Since many of Europe's best local cheeses are not exported, enjoy the real thing while you are there.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

After the stories have been filed, America's foreign correspondents often retire to some of Europe's finest restaurants. Here are some of their top choices:

- Rone Tempest, of the *Los Angeles Times* Paris bureau: favorite restaurant city Marseille, favorite restaurant Michel. "The specialty is bouillabaisse, but my favorite dish is grilled whitefish, with olive oil and fennel." Address: 6 Catalans.
- Marc Fisher, of the *Washington Post* Bonn bureau: favorite restaurant city Brussels, favorite restaurant Bruneau. "Each day the menu features a special complete meal, which can vary a great deal but is always wonderful. I especially enjoy the seafood, prepared in a simple, delicate style." Address: Avenue Broustin 73.
- Alan Riding, of the *New York Times* Paris bureau: favorite restaurant city Madrid, favorite restaurant El Espelo. "It

features Spanish foods with an international touch. I order exactly what the head waiter tells me and I've never been disappointed." Address: Paseo de Recoletos 31.

FREEDOM OF ESPRESSO

Everyone knows that the world's best espresso is found in Italy—but who can explain why? Timothy Castle, author of the forthcoming book *The Perfect Cup: A Coffee Lover's Guide To Buying, Brewing, and Tasting* (Addison-Wesley, \$10.95), has a theory, but it presents a chicken-and-egg problem. Because "espresso is drunk like crazy" there, he says, the espresso machines are in constant use, thus avoiding the metallic taste that underutilized machines impart. Italian espresso is good, that is, because people drink so much of it.



SPICE OF LIFE

When noted guidebook authors aren't on the job, they often like to eat ethnic. Here are two recommendations:

- Stephen Birnbaum, of the Birnbaum guides: It's hard to go wrong with Vietnamese food almost anywhere in Paris. His favorite: Tan Dinh. "Not only is it wonderful Vietnamese food but the wine list is one of the best in the city." Address: 60 rue de Verneuil.
- Adam Tanner, of Frommer's: Copenhagen is a great city for ethnic food. A favorite: La Rose de Tunis. "It is a nice re-creation of a Tunisian home, specializing in couscous and *brik*, or thin, crisp pancakes stuffed with tuna, meat, or chicken." Address: Vesterbrogade 120.



teem with fragrance, there is Zurich in the spring, when the flowering chestnut trees by the lake and in the parks scatter their dizzying scent all over, across the waters (you can smell it from the steamboats) and even into the flinty heart of the financial district.

No less irresistible, and present up and down the Continent six days a week in every season, is the aroma of fresh-baked bread. What would Paris be without it?

TASTES

WHICH BRINGS US TO THE PALATE. Shall we start the day with some of that French bread and café au lait? Or shall we go Spanish, with dark, hot chocolate, thick almost as pudding? And for dunking, how about some *churros*: deep-fried ring-shaped fritters, sinful and piping hot?

If I had to choose one style of cooking to eat for the rest of my life, I would without hesitation choose Northern Italian for the infinite variety of pastas and risottos, the tawny balsamic vinegars, the golden olive oils, the pungent truffles (black and white), the tender hams and juicy poultry, the tangy tomatoes and little wild strawberries. Happily there is no need to make that choice, so why forgo the delicate lake fish of Austria, set aflame under stalks of dried fennel, or the braised reindeer from Scandinavia? And what snack can beat a Swiss hot cheese tart, laced with onion and, sometimes, ham? (*Chäschrüechli* they call them in the German-speaking cantons. Do not attempt to pronounce it; just point.)

Cheese abounds wherever you turn. Let the board be set with Havarti from Denmark, fine Dutch Gouda, a moist French chèvre wrapped in grape leaves, a nutty Swiss Gruyère, a crumbling, marbled Gorgonzola!

And what shall it be to drink? Hard ciders from France; mineral waters, still or effervescent; *citron pressé*, which is to say lemon squash, served with a pitcher of water and a bowl of sugar, to be mixed to taste. Beers, wines, spirits? Let the waiter or sommelier surprise you with something wonderful—local.

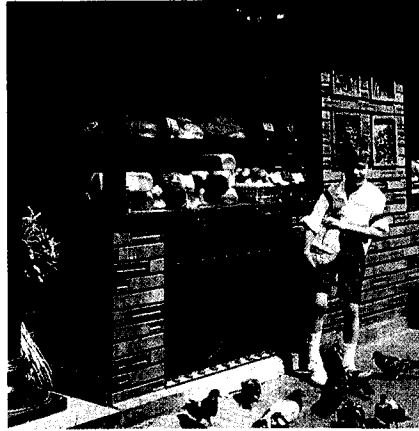
Sweets! On mature reflection, I would award the palm for chocolates to the Belgians. Their master chocolatiers, numerous as stars in Hollywood, and no less adored, outdo one another daily in bite-size masterpieces in every shape and color, plain and fancy, filled and solid. For cakes my vote goes to the Swiss, in particular for the *Zuger Kirschtorte*, a white cake thickly topped with powdered sugar, trimmed with ground pistachio, and so drenched in crystal-clear, stringent cherry brandy that it weeps (for joy?) at the slightest pressure of the fork. Still, the competition is fierce. Of humbler aspect yet no less glorious in the eating is apple stru-

del in the classic, Austrian style, its crisp dough golden-tan as parchment but thin and transparent as tissue, ready to burst with its tart filling of apple, raisins, butter, spice.

TOUCH

EVERYWHERE PEOPLE TRAVEL THEY are told not to touch—yet everyone touches all the time. Up the steps to the tower of Chartres Cathedral over the centuries, how smooth the cold stones have worn. How richly satisfying the textures of silks, linens, wools, and cottons when one shops in Paris, Milan, London, or Munich; how delicate the leather grain of the shoes, belts, bags, and wallets.

In fact or in imagination, our world is tactile. In front of *Las Meninas*, you can feel, as distinctly as with your fingertips, the polished finish of the infant's stiff taffetas. The low hard backs of the seats at Bayreuth, giving no quarter



Bon appétit!

to the slack or inattentive, are as integral to the Wagner experience as the music itself. And does the feel of fine tableware in the dining room not enhance the accomplishments of the chef in the kitchen?

But there are moments when tactile sensation goes beyond accomplishment to become the main event. Thus it is after a Finnish sauna, for instance, when your body still tingles from the fierce heat and the light touch of the

leafy birch switches, so silkily voluptuous that you feel almost indecent in your own skin. One of the few experiences to mention in the same breath is a summer plunge into Lake Fuschl, outside Salzburg. Occasional hang gliders, launched from the surrounding peaks, fly overhead in the distance, and wind surfers dart across the surface in the Alpine breeze. But floating on your back, with nothing on your mind but the azure of the sky and the blissful cool of the limpid water, you will want never to return to shore. When you do, and the time comes to say goodbye to your European friends, it will be with a firmer handshake and an easier embrace than you can expect at home.

You know then, if ever you thought otherwise, that you will be back. Your sixth sense tells you so.

WE EXTEND SPECIAL THANKS, for their help in research and reporting, to Robert Moeller, Dan O'Kane, Liam O'Malley, and Ethan Seidman. Thanks also, for their help, to Pauline Delli-Carpini, Christine Frascello, Linda Harris, Robin Karson, Mary Lyons, George Matthew, Lynn Thomas, and Rick Wilcox.

ROYAL TREATMENT

Finland is said to have one sauna for every four people. Indeed, Finnish expertise with saunas sets their spas apart from all others, says Dr. Theodore Van Itallie, a professor at Columbia University's College of Physicians and co-author of *The Best Spas* (HarperCollins, 1989, \$10.95). According to Van Itallie, two of Finland's best spas are also two of its oldest. The Haikko Manor Hotel Health Spa, near the fourteenth-century seacoast town of Porvoo, was once reserved for the private pleasure of the Russian and Swedish royal families. The Naantali Spa is in the fifteenth-century town of Naantali, known for its spas since 1720. For more information, write or call the Finnish Tourist Board, 655 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017; 212-949-2333.



ROCKS AND HARD PLACES

To rock climbers, southern France's Buoux, a limestone crag, is "The Laboratory," where top sport climbers test themselves on one of the world's densest arrays of extreme routes. Buoux,

and the equally famous Verdon Gorge, also in southern France, attract crowds—but many countries in western Europe have excellent crags. *The Rock Climbing Guide to Europe* (Mountaineers Books, 800-553-4453, \$21.95), to be published in May, details more than 600 of them.

SHEET DREAMS

The Pratesi company, of Italy, boasted in a 1981 advertisement, "Most of the European aristocracy has been conceived in Pratesi sheets." Certainly, Western Europe is the source of some exceptional bed linens:

- *Brown Thomas*, Grafton Street, Dublin. Irish linen is considered by many to be the finest in the world, and this store offers a large selection.
- *Frette*, Calle Large XXII Marzo 2070-A, Venice. Look for other Frette stores in Rome, Milan, and Florence, too.
- *Porthault*, Avenue Montaigne 18, Paris. This is the flagship among eight Porthault stores.
- *Pratesi*, Via Montalbano 41, Pisa. This factory outlet outside Florence sells the com-

TOUCH

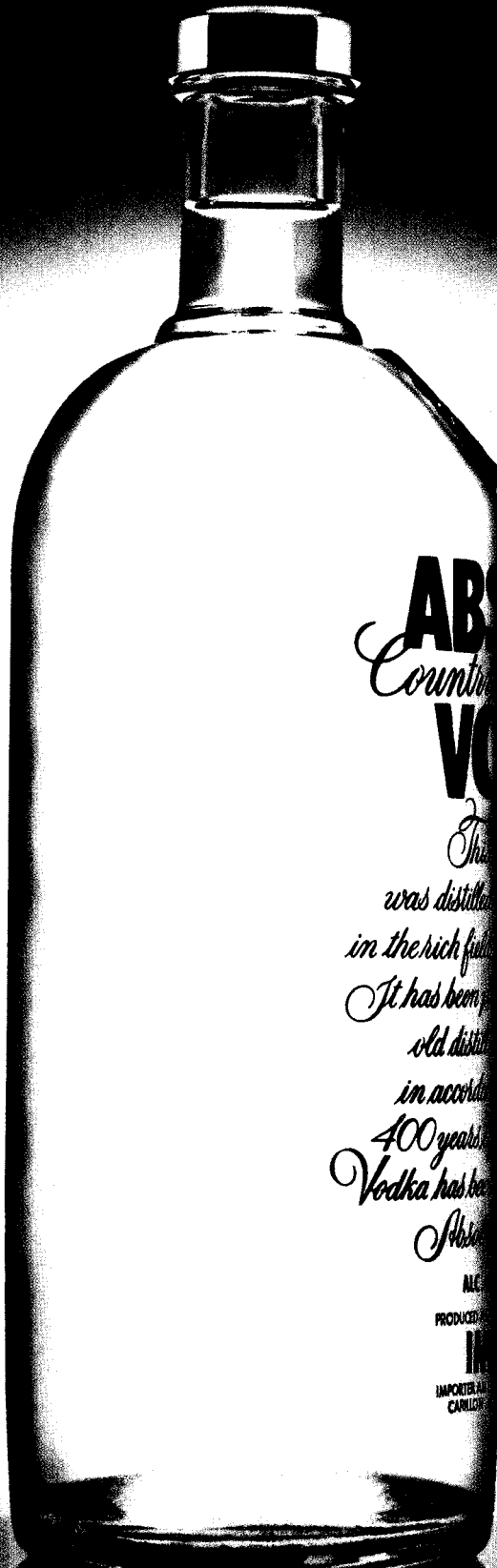
pany's imperfect linens. Appointments must be arranged in advance, through Antonella Fracassi (05-73-527-232). Pratesi's main retail stores are in Rome, Forte dei Marmi, and Torino.

STROKES OF LUCK

At a number of shrines in Europe, courting fortune of one kind or another is a contact sport:

- *The Blarney Stone*. This famous relic is located in the fifteenth-century Blarney Castle, five miles from Cork, Ireland. Those who kiss it must feel lucky just to survive the experience, for one must lie on one's back, hold on to railings, and hang one's head upside down.
- *Everard 't Serclas Statue*. In this statue, in Brussels's Grand Place, a fourteenth-century Belgian alderman who died a hero's death in battle against the Count of Flanders is depicted with his dog. Touching Serclas's arm or his dog's nose is said to bring good luck.
- *Il Porcellino*. Rubbing the nose of this statue of a wild boar, which sits atop a bronze fountain in Florence, is said to bring good luck and ensure a return trip.

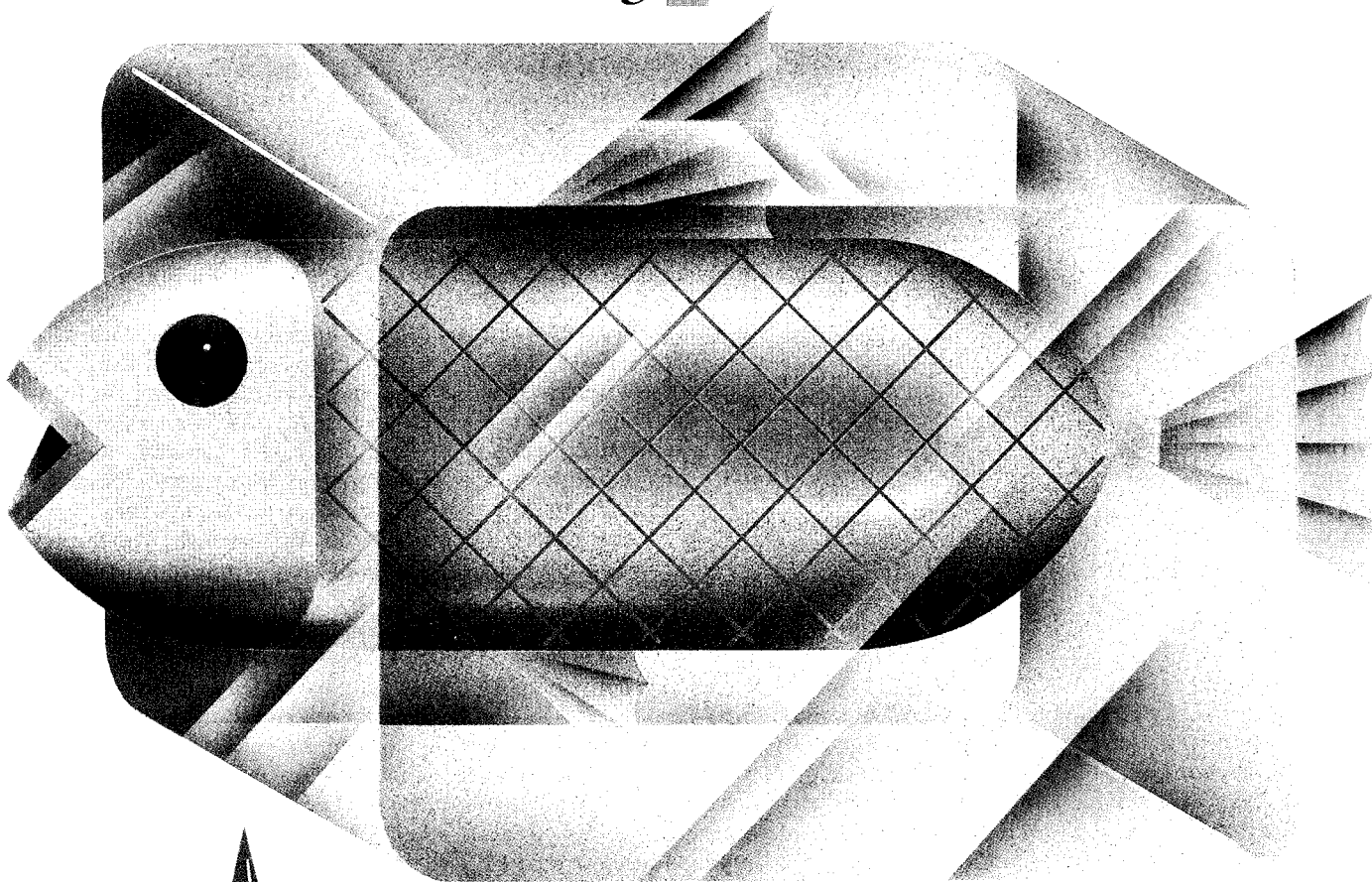




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On Ice

You probably underrate your freezer. It can serve you better

by Corby Kummer

I NEVER THOUGHT that my freezer could be good for much besides stocks, soups, and leftovers I hadn't gotten around to eating, until I read Michael Roberts's new *Fresh From the Freezer*. Roberts is one of the very few original thinkers writing about food, and a terrific cook, too: as the chef and co-owner of Trump's, he has managed to keep a Los Angeles restaurant popular for ten years, which is quite an achievement. I was already an admirer of his *Secret Ingredients*, a 1988 book both wild and lucid in its suggestions of food combinations like lobster and vanilla, and grilled turkey with a burnt peanut butter marinade. After reading the new book, I went out and bought a freezer, realizing that the

small compartment above my refrigerator, usually blocked by icy crags, wasn't good enough to test some of Roberts's provocative theories. When a number of them worked, dramatically, I started talking to scientists about why. I learned just how mistakenly I had been using my freezer for years.

I was taking the wrong approach, it became clear, in treating my freezer like a bomb shelter. Certain things can be frozen successfully for six months to a year, notably beef (ground beef for only four months), chicken, stocks, and most cooked vegetables; many things store well for three to six months, such as veal and stews and cookie and pastry doughs; some things store well only for

a month or two, such as bacon and many kinds of fish; nothing in the freezer lasts forever, and nothing that is less than first-rate going in will be first-rate coming out. That free-range chicken in my old freezer compartment, carefully seasoned and readied to roast for guests who at the last minute couldn't come, won't be very good four years later. "This isn't a cryogenic cookbook," Roberts told me recently. "Things change in the freezer."

ONCE I DISPOSE of my fossils, I plan to use the compartment as a luxury few people have: a place to freeze food before putting it in my new freezer. The message from the scientists I spoke to was that home

freezers are better for storing foods that are already frozen than for freezing foods. Books and instruction manuals insist that you chill food before freezing it; I always thought the idea was that it would freeze more evenly and thus better, and the food could have the benefits of flash freezing, which ads trumpet. But the quality of what you keep in your freezer is much less dependent on how fast or at what temperature the food is frozen than on how it is kept afterward. The chief advantage of quick freezing—many small ice crystals rather than fewer big ones, resulting in a better texture upon thawing—starts to dissipate within days anyway. Ice recrystallizes, as anyone who has raided a pint of ice cream bit by bit knows. It constantly seeks other crystals and forms larger ones.

The real goal is to avoid warming up the air around the already frozen food, because that causes recrystallization. Chilled food put in to freeze warms the air less. The ideal in a large freezer is to free a shelf near the top, where cold air comes in, for freezing. A solution for those who don't have a large freezer is to try to leave room around the food being frozen.

Every time you open the freezer door, you encourage recrystallization, by introducing warm air. Bothersome ice crystals on the surface of frozen food will form whatever you do, but their formation is slowed by a steady low temperature; "in-package ice," the trade term, doesn't indicate a failure to freeze things correctly, as people seem to believe. The most convenient place to keep food is unfortunately the worst—inside the door.

Temperature fluctuations are less of a problem in a freezer that is cold enough in the first place. It's worth the electricity to keep your freezer at the coldest setting, preferably so that the temperature stays below zero; below minus 5° is even better, but few freezers get this cold. Most freezers in double-door units can't do any better than 5° to 10° above zero. Chest freezers offer less temperature variation and pre-

serve frozen food better, but are inconvenient unless you are an enthusiastic archaeologist and have exceptional circulation in your hands. Because a "frost-free" freezer guarantees constant cycles of warming and cooling, freezers that you defrost yourself are superior—if you remember to do it.

It's dispiriting to find a puddle of liquid under food you have thawed, since the liquid appears to contain all the moisture and flavor. But there's not much you can do about

it. The usual explanation for "drip loss" from frozen food is that big ice crystals puncture cell membranes and let water leach out.

That theory is too simple, according to Owen Fennema, a professor of food chemistry at the University of Wisconsin. It does apply to fruits and vegetables, whose rigid cellular structure doesn't easily incorporate ice crystals; hence the loss of texture in berries (some strawberries are bred for cell structures that can better withstand freezing). But in meat the cells, or fibers, are more flexible, and so can be better stored frozen.

The enemy of quality that you can fight is not water but oxygen. In any food you freeze, some water remains unfrozen, because it is so intimately bound to dissolved solids that it can't break free to form ice crystals. The viscous, concentrated liquid allows oxidation to occur. Oxidation causes off flavors that signal rancidity—the worst thing that can happen in the freezer, not because it's bad for your health but because it's disgusting. Rancidity is easily confused with the dreaded freezer burn, which in fact doesn't affect flavor much. "Freezer burn" refers to the sere patches on the surface of food where ice crystals sublime—pass from solid to vapor without ever being liquid (what happens to snow in cold, dry weather). Careful wrapping guards against it.

Unsaturated fats, the kind everyone is told to eat, are particularly prone to oxidation. Thus pork, a significant amount of whose fats are unsaturated, doesn't keep well for very long frozen.

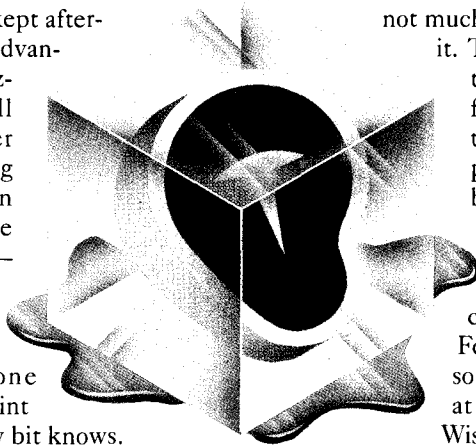
Beef, though, with mostly saturated fats, is "practically indestructible," in the words of Hugh Symons, of the American Frozen Food Institute. Chicken is in between, and it keeps for a longer time. Bacon and salted luncheon meats don't keep for long. At high levels salt encourages oxidation, resulting in changed flavor.

Fish are poor candidates for storing frozen longer than three months, partly because of their unsaturated fats. Most fish do fine in short-term storage, however. Frozen fish at the market, in fact, are often superior to "fresh" fish, which may have been sitting, half-frozen on ice, for the same amount of time as frozen fish that were carefully and thoroughly frozen on the boat.

Roberts has devised several ways around the fish problem. He freezes lean fish, such as whiting, and also meaty fish, such as tuna and mahi-mahi, in a wine-and-mustard marinade whose acid softens and flavors the flesh. He leaves sea scallops in lemon juice for an hour before freezing them "open"—uncovered and separated—on an oiled pan and then storing them in bags. They taste remarkably fresh when defrosted, still sweet and with their texture seemingly unchanged. Cook them straight from the freezer, to avoid drip loss. Roberts says that shad, one of my favorite fish, is actually improved by a light salting and then freezing—something I'm eager to try.

Perhaps Roberts's most remarkable trick is his way of preparing salmon (and other fish) for the freezer, by rubbing steaks or fillets with a mixture of one part salt to two parts sugar, and refrigerating them under a weight, such as a heavy can, for two and a half hours, turning them after an hour and a half. This sounds like a recipe for gravlax, but once cooked the salmon doesn't taste the least bit cured. It does taste wonderful—even better than when fresh, because the flavor deepens. It certainly has far better flavor and texture than a piece of untreated salmon frozen and cooked, which by comparison seems dry and bland.

Fruits and vegetables, too, pose challenges. Some of their enzymes break down fats or catalyze oxidation of fats in their cell walls, causing off flavors. Certain vegetables, strange as it sounds, are better bought frozen than fresh: the sugar in peas and corn converts to starch in hours, and processors



are able to cook and freeze them before the conversion—which you can't do unless you have a garden. And other commercially frozen vegetables may soon improve, according to David Reid, a professor of food science and technology at the University of California at Davis. All the vegetables in the frozen-food case have been blanched (boiled briefly) to inactivate enzymes. Researchers at Davis have pinpointed which enzymes cause problems in which vegetables, and are developing enzyme-inactivation tests that could shorten blanching times for string beans, broccoli, and cauliflower, among others. Since the effects of cooking on flavor and texture are much more pronounced before freezing than after, this could result in better vegetables from the frozen-food case.

In a very useful dictionary at the back of *Fresh From the Freezer*, Roberts gives instructions for blanching many vegetables at home, usually for just one to five minutes, and freezing them; he says they'll be good for up to a year. Vegetables that work well, he

says, are brussels sprouts, cabbage (either in whole leaves or shredded), carrots, celery root, corn, kale, okra, parsnips, bell peppers (best roasted and peeled first), and turnips.

Roberts hit on an ingenious technique for freezing asparagus, which is in season far too briefly and which if blanched before being frozen "ends up being strings with water that runs out when you defrost it." He soaks raw asparagus in salted water for ten minutes, freezes it, and serves it defrosted at room temperature, at which point, he says, it tastes as if it had been briefly cooked. The problem is that asparagus frozen this way lasts only eight weeks—but that's two months more of something that would be nice year-round.

Many fruits should be blanched or otherwise treated to inactivate enzymes that cause browning. Commercially frozen fruit is often sold in syrup, because sugar helps keep out oxygen and lessens browning. Some small frozen berries, such as wild blueberries and huckleberries, thaw without too much loss of texture, but most thawed

berries turn to mush. Pureeing the fruit before freezing overcomes the texture problem, and briefly cooking the puree inactivates enzymes that after a few months could cause browning. Mangoes freeze well, however, as do avocados. And pears, pineapple slices, and figs can be frozen raw as long as you cook them after defrosting.

IF YOU WANT to avoid oxidation and make things last a long time, buy good packaging material. The best keeps oxygen out and water vapor in, thus avoiding both oxidation and freezer burn. Freezer paper, which is coated on one side with plastic, is fine if you're good at wrapping things as neatly as a butcher and are generous with the paper.

Many foods, for instance chicken pieces and green beans, as well as scallops, are better frozen without any wrapping; be sure to oil the surface of what they freeze on, so the food won't stick. Then put the food into bags, squeezing out as much air as possible, or wrap it in plastic, which will more

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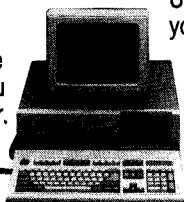


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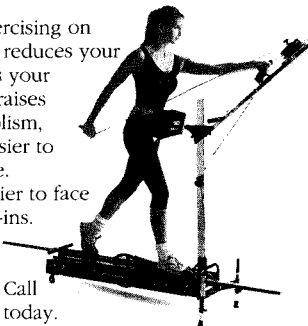
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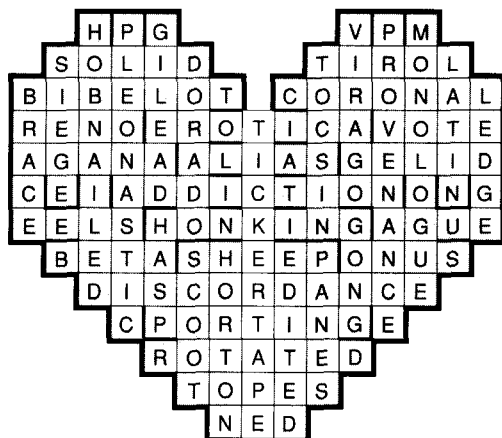
readily cling to the surface of the food. The clingiest plastic wrap, PVC (widely marketed as Reynolds Plastic Wrap), is unfortunately permeable to air. The plastic film PVDC (widely marketed as Saran Wrap) provides a very good barrier.

Freezer bags are made of heavy-gauge polyethylene, which is also excellent. (The bags dispensed at supermarket produce departments, however, are of very thin polyethylene, and are terrible for freezing.) I'm taken with the neatness of Dow's Ziploc freezer bags; Reynolds sells the similar product Sure-Seal. A disadvantage to bags is that the only way to keep straight in the freezer what looks like a pile of weird rocks is to put them in boxes or, better, the wire baskets sold in many sizes for organizing closet shelves. Rigid plastic freezer containers can be easily stacked, and they don't let in air or allow water vapor to escape. Unless they're exactly the right size, though (leave headroom for liquids, which will expand), they will trap air with the food, and the flavor and quality will deteriorate faster.

If you want meat to last at all, rewrap it, because supermarket plastic wrap is usually thin and porous. It's good to rinse poultry pieces and dry them with paper towels. Roberts says that once you're repackaging food, you might as well season it, since the salt, pepper, and garlic or paprika that you'll put on chicken for broiling, for example, will have a chance to flavor the chicken pieces while they thaw. Poultry frozen on the bone will have better texture after thawing, and the skin functions like a built-in barrier, so leave it on. Whatever you use for packaging, do what your mother told you: label and date everything. It's hard enough to tell what something is after it's frozen, let alone remember when you put it there.

Don't freeze food in portions larger than you will need at one time. Most people know to freeze sauces in an ice-cube tray, and then keep the frozen cubes in a plastic bag. Roberts extends the method to tomato paste and chutney, and to sauces of his like a creamy walnut pesto and a mushroom sauce with onions and sherry, for pasta. He recommends against freezing minced raw onions, saying that sautéed chopped onions freeze much better. But chopped fresh ginger and pureed raw garlic or basil leaves mixed with oil

Answers to the February Puzzler



"HEARTBROKEN"

Across. 7. S(O)LID 9. T(I)ROL(I) 11. BIBELOT (anag.) 12. COR(ON)AL 14. R-ENO (one rev.) 15. E(ROI)CA (ace rev.) 16. V-O-T(h)E 17. AGANA (hidden) 18. A-LAS (homophone) 19. GE(t)-LID 20. A(D)DITION (d + anag.) 21. (f)EELS 22. HO(NIN)G 24. (v)AGUE 25. BET-A 26. S(HE)P 30. ON-US 31. DISCO DANCE (anag.) 32. PO-RING 33. (t)ROTTED 34. TO(m)ES 35. ND (hidden) Down. 1. HOBNAILED (anag.) 2. PL(EON)ASTIC 3. GI-LEAD 4. VIR(A)GO 5. PR(OVEN)ANCE 6. MO(NO-LOG)UE 7. SIEGE (odd letters) 8. DOR-ADO (rod rev.) 9. TOCSIN (homophone) 10. LA-TI-N 11. B-RACE 13. L-EDGE 22. HAS-P 23. GO(i)NG 26. S(C)OOT 27. H-OR-TON 28. ED(IT)-ED 29. PANES (homophone)

are good candidates for the ice-cube tray (you might want to buy a tray for mini-cubes). Some herbs, including parsley and sage, can be successfully frozen in whole leaves.

A WORRISOME problem is that re-freezing thawed food is risky, in terms both of quality and of safety. Owen Fennema and Susan Temple, the manager of the meat and poultry hotline at the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Inspection Service (800-535-4555), each gave me a good talking-to about leaving something on the counter to defrost while you're at work. Because refrigeration only retards microbial growth, it can be dangerous to refrigerate for a few days something that reached room temperature while being defrosted. The choice is between defrosting in the refrigerator, always keeping the food temperature below 40°, and defrosting it fast—for example, in a microwave oven—and cooking it right away. The problem with the microwave is that it can cook part of what you're defrosting, especially if it's something big; hot water poses the same problem.

It might come as a surprise that freezing does not sterilize. The only things it reliably kills are some parasites in fish and pork. Everything else remains dormant. Even if the amount of pathogenic bacteria such as salmonella is reduced during freezing, after a fairly short time at room temperature it can easily come back to or exceed the level it was at before being frozen. You can refreeze meat and fish if its temperature has never gone above 40°. Some conservative scientists, however, warn that freezing may also inhibit the activity of the many kinds of bacteria that naturally slow the growth of pathogenic bacteria, and they counsel against all refreezing.

AN IMPORTANT lesson from Roberts is to separate solids and liquids in any cooked dish, including soups and stews, before freezing them, to preserve texture and individual flavors. Many of the recipes in *Fresh*

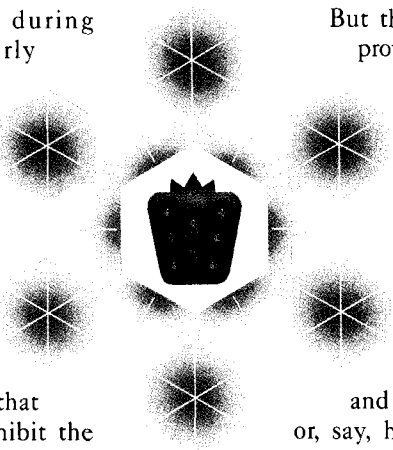
From the Freezer are for "mother" soups and stews, frozen in this way and in portions as large as you'll use when finishing the recipe. A chicken fricassee, for example, can become chicken with balsamic vinegar and green olives, chicken with broccoli and that creamy walnut pesto, or chicken with fresh ginger and snow peas. Roberts says, "People should think of the freezer as their personal shopping center, which they've stocked with ingredients they've done something to, not just stuff from the freezer case."

And many of those prepared ingredients can go straight from the freezer into the oven. All vegetables, for instance, can be cooked in the microwave oven or boiled. (You shouldn't try cooking food you freeze in plastic bags as you would commercial frozen food packaged in boil-in bags. Manufacturers recommend against cooking anything in freezer-storage bags, even though they probably won't melt; there is some question about whether they leach harmful chemicals into food, especially if the plastic comes into contact with fat.) You can cook frozen chicken breasts in any recipe, for instance, if you increase the cooking time. The key is the thickness. If something is more than an inch thick or if meat is on the bone, the outside can dry out or burn before the inside is cooked.

But the technique can improve certain foods. If you

like things breaded but shy away from the fat that breading usually requires, you can use fresh bread crumbs, which you'll need far less of than dried; they will adhere better than dried after freezing;

and baked chicken cutlets or, say, homemade fish sticks will taste fried. Lasagna, that dish that always takes twice as long as it should, will taste freshly made if you prepare it with uncooked sheets of pasta and freeze it. While thawing and heating, the broad bands absorb moisture, and after the lasagna is baked, the flavors of the sauces and cheese, already melded in the freezer, infuse the pasta. It's a dish that argues for the freezer as an invaluable cooking tool. □



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Raw Truth and Joy

Ray Charles cuts through his smoothness with jolts of musical pleasure

by Michael Lydon

RAY CHARLES is sixty. The gray hair that once touched his temples with distinction now crowns his whole head, and he has earned the title he was introduced with each night of a recent engagement at the Blue Note jazz club, in New York—"The Legendary Genius of Soul"—many times over. In the thirty-five years since he merged rhythm-and-blues and gospel in "I Got a Woman," the crossover hit that opened the pop market to his sound, Ray Charles has grown unstopably as a musician. Listening blind to the sounds of life around him, he has absorbed whole idioms as if by osmosis—blues, jazz, country, and ballad—reinvigorated them with his empathy, intelligence, and sexy sense of

humor, and then sung them back to the world. Listeners love the contrast of his rough-sweet voice with the sound of his big band, strings, and chorus. With each year Charles's music becomes more playful and profound, and displays richer understanding. "Seniority by sonority" determines precedence in music, Dizzy Gillespie says. By this standard, I think, Ray Charles ranks among the masters of modern music.

Ray Charles has succeeded so well in making music for millions that today he swims in our common consciousness. Who, for example, is Ray Charles to you? You may own a dozen of his albums, or just a battered copy of *The Ray Charles Story, Vol. One*. Or you may

own none, but when you were in high school, your parents took you to a concert, or you danced to "What'd I Say" at a great party one summer night. Perhaps you've seen Charles in the movie *The Blues Brothers*, with Johnny Carson on *The Tonight Show*, or kidding around with Joe Montana in Diet Pepsi ads.

My earliest vivid memory of Ray Charles's music dates from 1961: "Hit the Road, Jack" blasting out of dormitory windows freshman year at Yale. For a few years, caught up with the Beatles, the Stones, and Dylan, I didn't listen to Charles much. Then I heard him with Aretha Franklin at the Fillmore West in 1971, and devoured his two masterpiece albums from that era, *A Message From the People* and *Volcanic Action of My Soul*. This time my bond with Charles has lasted, becoming stronger every time I hear his music.

Like any fan, I love my idol most for the jolts of musical pleasure he's given me: dazzling piano solos during a week of shows at the Circle Star, near San Francisco, which are still etched in my mind eighteen years later; the first time I heard him sing "Oh What a Beautiful Morning," on *Saturday Night Live* in the fall of 1977. Until Charles's version I had never really heard Hammerstein's line "All the sounds of the earth are like music." I love the conspiratorial "heh-heh" Charles throws into a lyric whenever he's moved by silliness. Every time I hear Ray Charles in person, at some point he breaks through the smooth surface of the entertainment with surges of communication so intense as to be almost painful. At the Blue Note the moment came at the end of "How Long Has This Been Going On?" when a scream cut across the trumpets' high harmony like a chainsaw through polished parquet. For a long five seconds I and the entire audience sat stuck in our seats before we could scream back in welcome release.

In calmer moments I can put my admiration for Ray Charles in context, seeing him, for instance, as a direct descendant of Louis Armstrong's in the extended family of African-American music, an older brother of Aretha Franklin's, and an uncle of Stevie Wonder's. Charles broke through to a wide audience as a member of Chuck Berry's and Bo Diddley's rock-and-roll generation; his big band connects him to Duke Ellington and Count Basie;

his comedy links him to the singer and saxophonist Louis Jordan, who also wrote "Let the Good Times Roll," one of Charles's greatest hits.

In *Brother Ray* (1978), his autobiography, Charles says that the pianist Art Tatum is the only musician of whom he stands in awe. When he first met Tatum, in the early 1950s in a Los Angeles nightclub, he remembers, "I couldn't utter a word. . . . I just stood there like an idiot with my mouth open and my heart beating so fast that I was sure everyone around me could hear it thumping." Influenced by Nat King Cole, Charles became both a singer and a pianist, yet his keyboard style, in its florid variety, is as distinctive as Thelonious Monk's spare singularity. In Charles's piano I hear black gospel and white country-and-western, funky Horace Silver and cool Ahmad Jamal, even flashes of B. B. King's blues guitar.

Ray Charles stands among the most influential pop vocalists of the century—Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, and Elvis Presley. What an expressive instrument his voice is! Like his peers, Charles knows how to use the microphone to sing intimately to the listener, but none of the others attempts his range of vocal tone and color. He can talk a lyric with the plain-spoken eloquence of Ella Fitzgerald or howl it as inarticulately as James Brown. Fans in the fifties heard raw truth in Charles's voice and dubbed him the "High Priest"; every song is still a sermon of unimpeachable authority.

Sustained success in the frankly commercial realm of popular art can depend as much on business acumen as on craft. Ray Charles has shown himself to be an uncommonly astute entrepreneur. Only in his early years with Atlantic Records did he sign the standard recording contract that gives an artist royalties but few rights over the shape and marketing of the finished product. After he jumped to ABC-Paramount, in 1960, Charles and his right-hand man, Joe Adams, built headquarters in West Los Angeles for Ray Charles Enterprises. Called the RPM building, it houses the company's three divisions—touring, music publishing, and recording. Its heart is its studio, where Charles has been making his albums for twenty-five years, often engineering them himself. His Tangerine Record Corporation leases the masters he creates at RPM

to major labels for distribution—Atlantic and Columbia in the eighties, and now Warner Bros. Though the sums involved are smaller, Ray Charles has staked out a commercial position with the same rugged independence as Clint Eastwood, who produces (and often stars in, writes, and directs) films through his own company.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE?, released last fall, is Charles's latest album and his first with Warner Bros. From the opening cushioned chords of "I'll Take Care of You," with a snare drum playing on the offbeat and Charles entering with a long and softly burred "Awww girl," I believe. Charles takes "Your Love Keeps Me Satisfied" as a blues cruise, skimming through a keyboard solo like a sea gull over dancing waves. "Ellie My Love" sounds like a modern Nashville ballad to me, but in fact Keisuke Kuwata wrote the music and original Japanese lyrics, and Charles's English version, first heard in Japan in a TV commercial, has already been a smash hit there. The rollicking groove of "I Can't Get Enough" ("of your sexy stuff") reminds me of Charles's jumping R&B sides for Atlantic. "Let's Get Back to Where We Left Off," a duet with Peggy Scott, is Charles in his lushest pop-Puccini mode.

So far my favorite song is side two's comedy opener, "Child Support, Alimony." The beat is nineties rap, but Charles's put-upon-male routine has been cracking up audiences in Harlem's Apollo Theater for fifty years. "She's eating steak, I'm eating baloney," he complains; "The witch!" his sympathetic buddy murmurs. From "Fresh Out of Tears" leaps a classic Ray Charles line, "A million dollars' worth of tears ain't worth a quarter." Charles sings "Living Without You," a poignant tune by the film composer Johnny Mandel, at the classic slow four-four tempo he often uses to bring out all the ache in "Georgia on My Mind." After dipping back into comedy with "Where're the Stairs?" (he's in a woman's bedroom and her boyfriend is at the door), Charles closes dramatically with "Leave Him!" underpinning with raspy electric guitar and harsh slapping chords from the brass the story of a woman afraid to leave a violent man.

Would You Believe? connects strongly

Coming Next Month In The Atlantic



QUEST FOR THE MOTHER TONGUE by Robert Wright

Vitaly Shevoroshkin does not look like a guerrilla leader. "A more plausible guess as to his occupation," the author writes, "would be: leader of a philosophical school whose upshot is unmitigated despair." But Shevoroshkin is largely responsible for an insurrection in the world of comparative linguistics. Unlike most of his colleagues, he believes that all the great language families are descended from a common tongue. And he believes that parts of this tongue can be reconstructed.



CONSIDER THIS, SEÑORA by Harriet Doerr

"Consider this, señora," Carlos said, and from the edge of the terrace where they stood he embraced the landscape, drawing to him the municipality of Santa Felicia . . . and all the plowed and wooded world beyond. Consider the sun, the pure air. . . . Consider the tranquility. These people have abandoned their other lives. Now they have this." A short story.

You deserve a factual look at. . .

Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank")

Whom does it belong to? Is it "occupied territory"?

Many even otherwise well-informed people believe that the turmoil in the Middle East is due to the Israeli "occupation" of Judea and Samaria, also known as the "West Bank"—a territory less than half the size of Los Angeles County.

What are the facts?

■ Jews have been living in all parts of "Palestine" since Biblical times. After World War I, Britain was in control of Palestine. Earlier, in 1917, it had issued the Balfour Declaration. It called for the establishment in Palestine of a "national home for the Jewish people", with the understanding that the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish community would be respected.

■ Until Jewish immigration into "Palestine" began in earnest early in this century, the country was sparsely populated and underdeveloped (Mark Twain describes the desolation well in his book *Innocents Abroad*.) Its civilization was that of the Middle Ages. When the Jews came into the country, they created commercial, agricultural, and industrial opportunities which acted as a magnet to the Arabs, most of them nomadic.

■ In 1920, the League of Nations made Britain the mandatory power in Palestine, effective in 1922. The Mandate, in line with the Balfour Declaration, provided for the establishment of a Jewish national home in all or any part of Palestine. The British, contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, divided the country in two parts. They granted the area east of the Jordan River to the Hashemite tribes, thus excluding it from Jewish settlement. They limited the Jewish National Home to an area within the 23% remaining west of the Jordan River. That entire area is about half the size of San Bernardino County in California. Transjordan was given independence by Britain in 1946.

In the Camp David Accords, Israel committed itself to autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of the area and to the determination of a permanent political status. Israel has invited representatives of Jordan and of the Arab inhabitants of Judea-Samaria to participate in autonomy talks. But, under pressure and threats of the PLO and Arab rejectionists, they have so far refused to participate in any negotiations. Peace, and the ultimate resolution of the problem of the "West Bank" can only come about by negotiations. Israel has been ready for such negotiations for more than 20 years.

Israel declared its independence in April of 1948, on the same day as Britain relinquished its Mandate, and after the Arabs had rejected a partition plan proposed by the United Nations.

■ In its War of Independence, against overwhelming odds, the newly-formed Israel Defense Forces were able to defeat five combined Arab armies. Transjordan, however, succeeded in pushing westward across the Jordan River and in occupying Judea and Samaria. They were the occupiers, and they stayed in that occupation until they attacked Israel in 1967 and were defeated in the Six-Day War. During its 19 years of occupation, Transjordan, now renamed "Jordan", systematically removed all Jews from the territory. Jewish holy places were profaned and destroyed.

■ Israel has administered Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") since 1967. Approximately 90,000 Israelis have settled there. The Arab population in the area enjoys local autonomy, civil liberties, free access to higher education, and the highest standard of living of any Arab population anywhere in the countries neighboring on Israel.

■ A homeland for Arab Palestinians? Of course, they deserve one. They have such a country. It's Jordan. Jordan (77% of the British Mandate) is Arab Palestine. Never in history has there been an Arab state in Judea and Samaria, and there certainly was never any mention of it during the 19 years of Transjordanian occupation.

to Charles's past. It is also his first experiment with a recording technique that has become commonplace in the past decade: using synthesizers, sound samplers, and drum machines to create the instrumental tracks and sometimes (though not on this album) even the *ahhs* and *oohs* of vocal background. Until now Charles has recorded instruments at RPM, hiring top Los Angeles session men to play arrangements by Quincy Jones, Sid Feller, and Mike Post, and then mixing the tracks to highlight the exquisite timbral effects, gleaming steel guitars, and piano notes splashing like pebbles in a pond. This time the songwriter-producer Jimmy Lewis brought Charles prerecorded instrumentals for five of the album's tunes. (Lewis worked with Charles first in 1969, on *Doing His Thing*, an entire album of Lewis tunes.) Lewis sketched the sounds of each song in his home synthesizer studio and then had the sketches realized by the synthesist Charles Richard Cason.

This means, for instance, that the guitar and brass sounds on "Leave Him!" were made not by six strings and by taut lips on a mouthpiece but by Cason on a keyboard he had set to the proper parameters. Recording with synthesizers instead of a live band is simpler for the producer, Lewis told me recently. "No more hiring twenty guys to hang around the studio because the bass player is stuck on the freeway." The precise yet diaphanous quality of Cason's sound, not convenience for the producer, was what attracted Charles, however. "With Ray, it's always got to sound good," Lewis said. "When I played him the tracks, he liked them. If he hadn't, he wouldn't have sung to them."

Though Charles made adjustments in spots—for example, adding conga drums to "Where're the Stairs?"—the sound Lewis designed for him fits Charles like a second skin. "He loves horns," Lewis said, "so I gave him plenty." The five songs Charles produced have a looser, more "live" feel than Lewis's, but they, too, are more synthesizer than band. Unless I'm listening for it, I don't hear the difference. I simply enjoy Charles's voice set in the album's coolly contemporary ambience. *Would You Believe?* glows with all of Ray Charles's most saturated colors, this time synthesized into airbrushed neon. □

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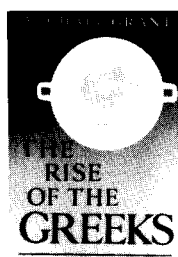
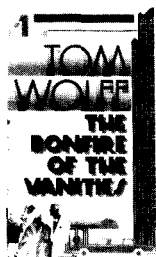
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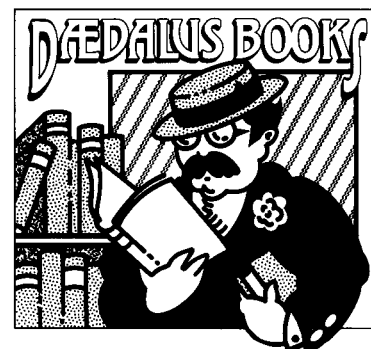
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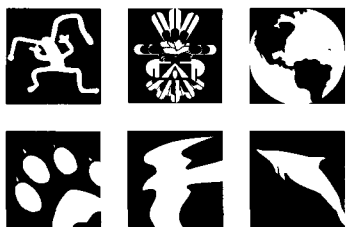
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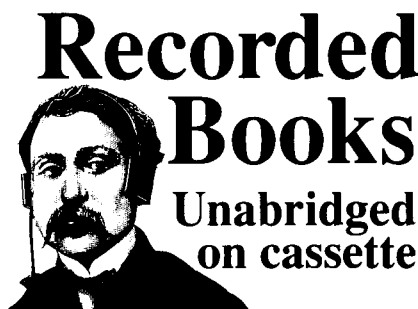
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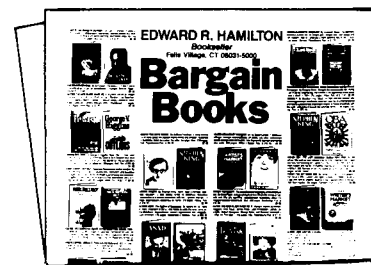
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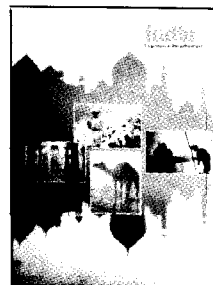
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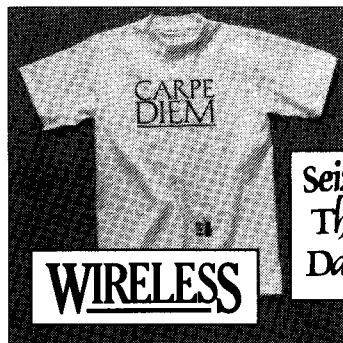
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Books

The Harry Hopkins Affair

by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

KGB: THE INSIDE STORY
by Christopher Andrew and
Oleg Gordievsky.
HarperCollins, \$29.95.

THE HEADLINE IN *The New York Times* (October 15, 1990) read, "ROOSEVELT AIDE CALLED AN UNWITTING SPY." The aide in question was Harry Hopkins, and the source for the sensational accusation is a new book called *KGB: The Inside Story*. The authors are Christopher Andrew, a Cambridge don, respected for an earlier and very good history of the British intelligence community titled (in the United States) *Her Majesty's Secret Service*, and Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB officer who, after working many years under cover for British intelligence, defected to the West in 1985.

Time rarely runs long excerpts from books, but it ran them from *KGB: The Inside Story* in its October 22 issue, playing up the accusation against Hopkins in a special box. The next week *Time* endorsed the accusation when it wrote of Gordievsky's "revealing [that] Harry Hopkins . . . was an unwitting accomplice of the KGB" (emphasis added). Neutral editing would have replaced "revealing" with "claiming."

The accusation that President Franklin D. Roosevelt's closest wartime aide was a Soviet agent, even if an "unwitting" one, would seem a bombshell, raising dark questions and demanding national attention. But neither the *Times* nor *Time* made any visible effort to verify the startling charge. Apparently neither journal took such routine precautions as to ask Andrew and Gordievsky about their sources or to seek out either people who had worked with Hopkins or scholars who knew the period. The *Times* did later apologize for



its headline, and *Time* ran a few critical letters. Otherwise these celebrated journals let the story lie.

The only newspaper that seems to have done the natural thing is the right-wing but quite professional *Washington Times*, where David Braaten interviewed scholars and wrote a story (October 18) headlined "NO TAKERS ON TALE OF HOPKINS AS SPY." The Andrew-Gordievsky charge, the story began, "drew skepticism and outright scorn from historians of the period."

The Hopkins sensation died quickly. The Andrew-Gordievsky book remains, however, and its vilification of Hopkins, lest it be revived, deserves further investigation. Hopkins has been a target before. But the Andrew-Gordievsky accusation may sound more impressive than the fantasies, forty years ago, of Major George Racey Jordan, who claimed that Hopkins had shipped suitcases filled with atomic-bomb secrets to the Soviet Union.

It happened that I was scheduled last fall to appear on *What If?*, a BBC radio program chaired by Christopher Andrew. Concerned by Andrew's hit-and-run attack on Hopkins, I wired the BBC: "Unless Andrew can provide harder evidence and independent ver-

ification to justify his slurs on Hopkins, I must withdraw. I have no wish to imply Andrew's legitimacy by appearing on a program with him." The response: "In reply to your remarks [Andrew] asks that you read the text of his book, which he stands by."

So I turned to the book. Perhaps I should say a word about my credentials in the field. I served in the Office of Strategic Services during the war, worked with William Casey (with whom I formed a lifelong friendship despite acute political disagreements) in Paris, and was one of the OSS officers who successfully opposed the use of Noel Field, a man whom, after interrogation, we suspected of being a Soviet agent. Field's proposal, backed by Allen Dulles in Switzerland, was that the OSS subsidize a Communist-controlled group of anti-Nazi Germans. I was not surprised after the war by the disclosure of Field's Soviet connections.

I returned to the United States in late 1945 without great hope for Soviet-American postwar collaboration and proposed to *Life* that I write an article on the American Communist Party. In researching the piece I had several talks with Whittaker Chambers, then an editor at *Time*. The article was pub-

lished in the July 29, 1946, issue. It was a very early account of Communist penetration of American institutions, including the federal government, and it got me into much trouble with friends more hopeful than I about working with Communists.

I have always supposed that Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs were involved in Soviet espionage. My Chapter 12, "Growth of a Conspiracy," in *The Politics of Upheaval*, Volume Three of *The Age of Roosevelt*, goes at length into the question of covert Soviet-organized intrusions into American society. In 1963, when Michael Straight declined a job offer by the Kennedy Administration for reasons of incriminating incidents in his past, I sent him to tell his story to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, thereby setting in motion the train of events that led to the unmasking of Anthony Blunt. In short, the problem of Soviet espionage has been an interest of mine for half a century, and I am not altogether untutored in the field.

KGB: The Inside Story was written by Andrew after prolonged interviews with Gordievsky. Gordievsky had joined the KGB in 1962 (sixteen years after the death of Harry Hopkins) and was turned by MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service, in 1974. In 1985, fearing exposure, he fled the Soviet Union, leaving his wife and children behind. It is not clear whether he took documents with him, as Igor Gouzenko and other KGB defectors have done. Not many KGB documents are cited in the book, but Gordievsky wrote *The Times* of London (November 13) that he plans to publish a selection of documents in a companion volume.

In any event, Gordievsky says he worked in 1980 on the KGB's sixtieth-anniversary in-house history and had specific responsibility for the sections on KGB operations in Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and Australasia. *KGB: The Inside Story* is based on Gordievsky's recollections of the relevant files a half dozen years after, supplemented by Andrew's research.

KGB has plenty of footnotes, but historians will find it an exasperating work. What strikes one first is how little new there is in it. It is mostly a rehash of familiar names and events, and it is largely derived from secondary sources. Oddly, neither Gordievsky's immersion in the KGB files nor his life

as an operative produces much that was not known already.

One is struck, too, by Andrew's credulity. He seems to swallow as gospel everything that Gordievsky, Elizabeth Bentley, Hede Massing, and other ex-Communists say. He is equally gullible in his embrace of secondary sources. Francis Wheen, in London's *Independent on Sunday* (November 11), quotes a CIA official: "Andrew was reputable before this. But his reputation is gonna change now because he's used so many secondary sources and anonymous sources—something for which he's criticized others in the past."

The sections on KGB operations in Britain reflect Gordievsky's research in KGB archives. He had access to Anthony Blunt's file, and the account of the famous Cambridge group is convincing. Gordievsky names John Cairncross as the Fifth Man but admitted at his London press conference that he had not seen the Cairncross file, although he later claimed to have had access to documents that implicated Cairncross.

Gordievsky does not claim to have seen files on NKVD operations in the United States. Instead, Andrew provides a potted account of Soviet espionage in America, drawn from published and sometimes dubious sources and interspersed with Gordievsky's recollections of KGB corridor gossip.

Thus he describes Harry Dexter White as "the most important of several NKVD agents in the U.S. Treasury." Now, Harry White apparently believed that there was no enemy to the left. He tolerated Communists on his staff, like Gregory Silvermaster, Solomon Adler, and Frank Coe, and may have himself passed information to Soviet contacts when the USSR was regarded as an indispensable ally. He was nasty, cantankerous, and an intriguer, but no conclusive evidence has emerged to show that he was a controlled Soviet agent.

Some evidence points in the other direction. The Morgenthau plan, the Treasury's Carthaginian peace for Germany, is sometimes cited as proof of White's pro-Soviet manipulations; but in fact White tried to get Henry Morgenthau to soften his views on Germany. White was the architect of Bretton Woods and of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund—agencies that the Soviet Union refused

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to join on the grounds that they were calculated instruments of American capitalist hegemony.

AS FOR Harry Hopkins, the Andrew-Gordievsky accusation is based primarily on Gordievsky's recollection twenty-five years later of a lecture he had heard as a KGB trainee by a man called Iskhak Akhmerov, who was explaining, like many an old veteran before an audience of young recruits, how he had won the war twenty years before that. Andrew and Gordievsky write that Akhmerov held secret meetings with Harry Hopkins, "the closest and most trusted adviser of President Roosevelt," where he brought Hopkins "personal and confidential messages" from Stalin. Gordievsky says that Akhmerov called Hopkins "the most important of all Soviet wartime agents in the United States."

Hopkins, the authors gratuitously surmise, "must have experienced a remarkable sense of secret pride that he enjoyed the confidence of the two most powerful leaders in the world." Hopkins enjoyed Churchill's confidence, too, but this goes unmentioned, save for the crack "There was no British Hopkins in Churchill's entourage." According to Gordievsky, other KGB specialists on the United States "agreed that Hopkins had been an agent of major significance."

Historians ought to be as precise as possible, but Andrew's theory of Hopkins is full of contradictions. As if wanting to play the Hopkins case both ways and escape the implications of Gordievsky's sensational charge, Andrew shifts into an exculpatory mode:

Hopkins had been an unconscious rather than a conscious agent . . . Hopkins was no admirer of either the principle or practice of the Communist one-party state . . . In backing Stalin and the Soviet war effort Hopkins acted from determination to prevent a Nazi victory rather than from a secret commitment to the Communist cause. . . Hopkins did not depart from what he saw as American interests. . . He was an American patriot with no desire to introduce the Soviet system in the United States.

Was this admirable American democrat the same fellow whom Andrew and Gordievsky call the most important of Soviet wartime agents in America?

It was this spray of benign comment

that led *The New York Times* to present Hopkins weirdly as "an unwitting spy" and *Time* to call him "an unwitting accomplice." Obviously spies and accomplices must by definition be witting. And, as June Hopkins, Harry's granddaughter, reasonably protested in a letter to *The New York Times* (November 11), "Harry Hopkins never did anything unwittingly."

The Hopkins-Akhmerov meetings, according to Andrew and Gordievsky, "remained unknown and unsuspected in the West until revealed by Gordievsky." They remain unknown also to Hopkins's appointment calendar. The name that Akhmerov used when approaching New Dealers (Michael Straight among them) was Michael Green. A search of Hopkins's day books from 1937 to 1945, at the Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, shows only one meeting with anyone named Green—a "Colonel Green," for half an hour on May 5, 1942, no doubt Colonel Joseph Green, the arms-control expert in the State Department.

I suppose one cannot exclude the possibility that Hopkins met with Akhmerov—though Michael Straight, who did meet with him, wonders how Akhmerov made the transition from an espionage controller to a top-level intermediary. But such meetings would prove nothing, especially if Hopkins saw Akhmerov as the personal representative of Stalin and especially since he was working for a President with a penchant for back channels. Twenty years later Robert Kennedy, JFK's Harry Hopkins, used to meet regularly with Georgi Bolshakov, a KGB man in Washington who bore messages from Khrushchev. But that did not make Robert Kennedy a KGB agent—though heaven knows what an aging Bolshakov might claim in his anecdotalage.

Hopkins thought it essential to keep the Red Army fighting against Hitler and to dissuade Stalin from seeking a separate peace. So did General Eisenhower, as his grandson demonstrated in a recent book; so did Winston Churchill; so, to drop a few ranks, did I, as a corporal in the European Theater of Operations. Did this make us "unconscious agents" of the NKVD?

For that matter, did Hopkins always conform to the Soviet line? One episode unmentioned in *KGB* is worth recalling. In October of 1944 Churchill went to Moscow to make an agreement

with Stalin dividing occupied Europe by percentages into Soviet and Western zones. Roosevelt had drafted a cordial cable wishing Churchill good luck. Hopkins intercepted it and telephoned Charles E. Bohlen, the Soviet expert at the State Department. "In his usual no-nonsense manner," Bohlen recalled in his memoirs, *Witness to History*, "he said, 'Chip, get the hell over here in a hurry.'" When Bohlen arrived, Hopkins instructed him to draw up a cable making it clear that the United States would not necessarily endorse any Churchill-Stalin agreement. Roosevelt saw the point and sent the new cable.

After Roosevelt's death Akhmerov, according to his exercise in self-glorification, persuaded an ailing Hopkins to go to Moscow in order to sell out the anti-Soviet Poles. In fact, as Pamela Harriman wrote to *Time*, "The two men who persuaded Truman to send Hopkins, and Hopkins to go, were Averell Harriman and Charles E. Bohlen, both of whom were then considered hard-liners on Soviet-American relations." Andrew and Gordievsky note the Harriman-Bohlen initiative without noting the evident contradiction. Or, perhaps Harriman and Bohlen—Truman, too?—were unconscious KGB agents.

The force of the Andrew-Gordievsky accusation against Hopkins is further diminished when one discovers later in their book that they bring the same charge, accompanied by the same I-take-it-back exculpatory language, against both President Urho Kekkonen, of Finland (whom "the KGB regarded as its highest-ranking agent during and beyond the Cold War"), and Prime Minister Olof Palme, of Sweden ("though not a fully recruited agent, was subject to KGB influence"). By the same logic one could argue that Gorbachev is an unconscious agent of the CIA.

KGB HAS SUCH shoddy aspects that one is inclined to retract one's regard for *Her Majesty's Secret Service*. One photograph has the caption "Alger Hiss, on the far right, sitting next to President Roosevelt during the Yalta conference." It sounds like an incriminating picture all right, but in fact, as a glance at the photograph plainly shows, the person sitting next to the President is not Hiss but Bohlen, Roosevelt's interpreter. The

Andrew-Gordievsky book confirms one's impression of KGB incompetence, but surely Gordievsky should be better than that at photo identification.

Andrew has another Yalta anecdote, describing Stalin in high good humor "at the final photo call," entertaining the Anglophones by repeating his only four phrases of English: "You said it!" "So what?" "What the hell goes on round here?" and "The toilet is over there." The scene isn't very plausible, and in fact it never took place. Ironically, Robert Hopkins, Harry's son, was at Yalta as the official Signal Corps photographer. "I was a few feet from Stalin throughout the entire photo session," he wrote me last November. "I can attest to the fact that Stalin never made these remarks." Andrew picked up this fantasy not from Gordievsky but from a secondary source, and the episode is another demonstration of his desire to add spice to the book.

A well-known Justice of the Supreme Court is curiously rendered as "Feliks" Frankfurter. An English review points out that the Andrew-Gordievsky account of the murder of Georgi Markov, the Bulgarian dissident broadcaster, gets the date and some of the circumstances "completely wrong." A week after the Markov assassination, Andrew and Gordievsky write, an attempt was made on the life of another Bulgarian exile, in Paris. In fact the attempt on the life of Vladimir Kostov took place ten days *before* the murder of Markov.

In a review in *The Spectator*, Phillip Knightley called the Andrew-Gordievsky attack on Hopkins "a smear which can only be described as shameful." Knightley went on,

For having made perceptive, accurate assessments of where America's best interests lay at a crucial stage in the second world war, solely because those interests happened to coincide with Soviet interests, a patriotic American is slandered and his memory besmirched. If Gordievsky really believes that Hopkins was not a conscious agent, then why has he told this story at all?

Knightley's surmise is that Gordievsky has entered the MI6 world, where patriotism is a monopoly of the right and no one to the left of Margaret Thatcher can be trusted.

There may be other reasons. The *Guardian* of London observed (Octo-

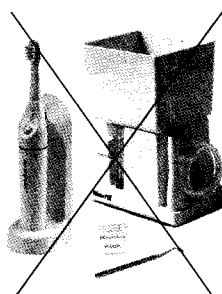
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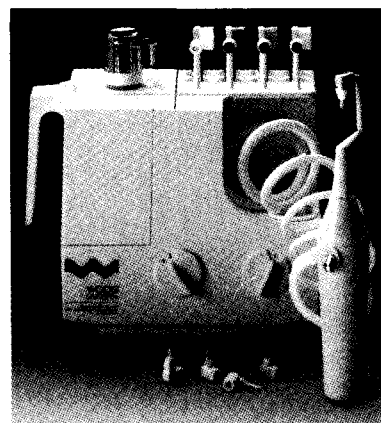
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Ellen Warner

ber 18) that *KGB: The Inside Story* "has reputedly brought the authors six-figure sums in royalties, serialisation and translation rights." No wonder the book is spiced with sensational stories about dead men like Hopkins, Kekkonen, and Palme! One trusts that the six-figure advances will make up for the damage done to the authors' reputations and credibility.

IN THE MEANTIME, why can we not at last take steps to solve the espionage mysteries? The American, British, and Soviet governments have in their possession the information that should settle the Hiss case, the Rosenberg case, the Fifth Man case, the Roger Hollis case, and all the others—settle them once and for all. Now that the Cold War is over, the only obstacle to the release of this information is the vested interest of the intelligence agencies in perpetual secrecy.

On the American and British side, the great code-breaking operation called Venona began in 1948 to decipher Soviet espionage communications going back to 1944. (Accounts of the Venona decrypts—known as Black Jumbo to the British and Bride to the Americans—are to be found in Robert J. Lamphere's *The FBI-KGB War*, Peter Wright's *Spycatcher*, and *Secret Intelligence*, by Ernest Volkman and Blaine Baggett.)

Some KGB agents detected by Venona escaped prosecution at the time because the decrypts could not be used in court without exposing the whole operation. Half a century later this reason no longer pertains. The ciphers and code-breaking techniques involved are long since obsolete. The National Security Agency can still be counted on to oppose the declassification of Venona intercepts—simply because intelligence people fear the precedent of disclosure. But Moscow knows who Stalin's agents in the United States were half a century ago. Why should not Americans know?

And if it still seems important to avoid public disclosure, why cannot Congress establish a commission composed of eminent historians and judges charged with reviewing the NKVD intercepts and preparing a report? Such a panel could protect whatever security interests the National Security Agency thinks might still be involved and at the same time discharge the debt to history owed in every democracy. □

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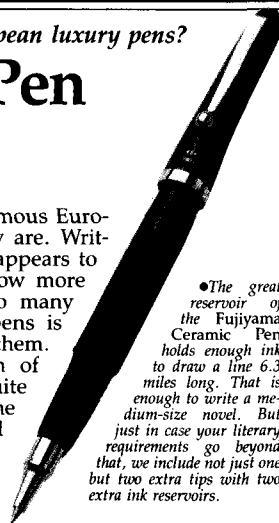
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Good Show

by Jack Beatty

LAST CHANCE TO SEE
by Douglas Adams and Mark
Carwardine.
Harmony Books, \$20.00.

WHO WOULD HAVE thought that a book in the field of "ecology/nature," to cite the rubric on its back cover, could be as lively, sharply satirical, brilliantly written, and even funny as this one? Not I; I should have thought that such a book would be oppressively earnest, the literary equivalent of prunes. A dread solemnity tends to come over writers in the face of "ecology/nature." They want to show their solidarity with the "creatures with whom we share the planet," or some such intimidatingly worthy moral ambition. Style, wit, energy, paradox—all the qualities that make writing more exciting than bird-watching—vanish in the presence of such lofty motives. Yes, I, too, care about the creatures with whom we share the planet; indeed, the night before I wrote this review, a sixty-five-pound creature jumped onto my chest at 4:40 A.M., emitted a voluptuous yawn, scratched himself so violently that he woke my wife, and then collapsed in a heap on my neck. I wasn't at all sure that I could continue to share the planet with him as I flung him out the door. And what I don't like about writers who specialize in "ecology/nature" is that they rarely own up to such feelings. They are too busy being good to be human.

DOUGLAS ADAMS is not that kind of nature writer. He smokes, he drinks, he has unflinching things to say about certain representative people of the Third World, a type often treated as a protected species, and he is an Englishman, which means that he would rather be clever than profound any day. Above all, he packs his irony with his shaving kit. He describes himself as a "writer of humorous science-fiction adventures," and is the author of the popular *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series. *Last Chance to See* is an episodic narrative of several

adventure-filled journeys that the author took with his zoologist coadjutor, Mark Carwardine. The idea was to do a BBC radio series on species that are close to extinction. They had a shocking lot to pick from.

"There are," Carwardine writes in a concluding section of the book called "Mark's Epilogue," "more than a thousand different species of animals and plants becoming extinct every year." We are what is doing them in: nothing evil we do, just the fact of us. "Most of the extinctions that have occurred since prehistoric time," Carwardine says, "have occurred in the last three hundred years." Most of the extinctions in that three-hundred-year period have happened in the past fifty years. And most of the extinctions in those fifty years have happened in the past ten. This inexorable attrition to zero can be stopped. It is being stopped now, in many places around the world. That is the good news of this book. It shows how human care can undo what human carelessness has wrought.

Adams and Carwardine went to the island of Komodo, in Indonesia, to see what is being done to preserve the famous giant Komodo dragon lizards; to Zaire, to check up on the mountain gorilla and the northern white rhino; to South Island, New Zealand, to see the kakapo, a nocturnal parrot who can't fly, has herculean difficulties mating, resorts most inappropriately to passive resistance just when a cat is about to make a meal of him, and, as you might

expect, is right on the edge of extinction; to China, to see the blind dolphins of the Yangtze River; and to the symbolic isle of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, site of a famous extinction—the beating to death by Dutch colonists of every dodo bird there would ever be.

THE PLEASURES of Adams's text may be divided into three categories—people, places, and animals.

Here he is on an Indonesian travel agent who was trying to explain why the tickets that Adams and Carwardine had reserved for a flight to an island adjacent to Komodo wouldn't get them there: "He tried to demonstrate the uselessness of stamping our feet to us with maps. 'In these areas,' he said, pointing to a large wall map of half of Asia, 'it works. East of this line here it doesn't work.'"

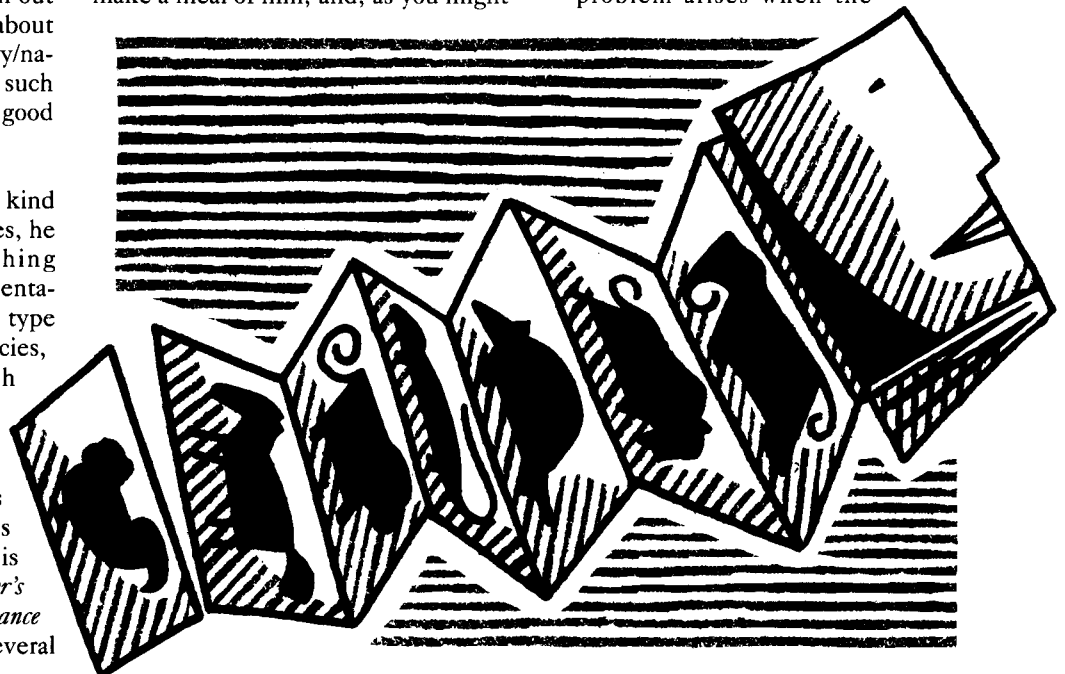
Next, a place:

Virtually everything we were told in Indonesia turned out not to be true, sometimes almost immediately. The only exception to this was when we were told that something would happen immediately, in which case it turned out not to be true over an extended period of time.

And another place:

Sleeping in Labuan Bajo, however, is something of an endurance test.

Being woken at dawn by the cockerels is not in itself a problem. The problem arises when the



cockerels get confused as to when dawn actually is. They suddenly explode into life, squawking and screaming at about one o'clock in the morning. At about one-thirty they realize their mistake and shut up, just as the major dogfights of the evening are getting under way. These usually start with a few minor bouts between the more enthusiastic youngsters, and then the full chorus of heavyweights weighs in with a fine impression of what it might feel like to fall into the pit of hell with the London Symphony Orchestra.

This passage ranks with the best set pieces in Mark Twain, and yet you can tell, by the repetition of "weigh" ("heavyweights weighs in"), that it was blithely tossed off. These Englishmen have transferred to writing the "we're all amateurs here" ethic that once won them an empire. Imagine what they could do if they really worked at it!

Finally, here is Adams on an animal:

The world of smells is now virtually closed to modern man. . . . When we read that Napoleon wrote to Josephine on one occasion, "Don't wash—I'm coming home," we are simply bemused and almost think of it as a deviant behaviour. . . . For a great many animals, however, smell is the chief of the senses. . . . Rhinoceroses declare their movements and their territory to other animals by stamping in their feces, and then leaving smell traces of themselves wherever they walk, which is not the sort of note we would appreciate being left.

People will probably buy *Last Chance to See* for its matter ("ecology/nature"), only to find themselves at grips with Adams's decided manner. Style is the real subject here. *Last Chance* makes us care about some hard-pressed animals, and it ends with a list of organizations to which we can send contributions if we wish to translate our concern into efficacious money. However, it renders this service to nature not through the instrumentalities of science but through those of humanism—rhetoric, irony, cadence, and wit. I believe it was Kierkegaard who wondered, "How can I be myself in the presence of the Truth?" This is a book for people who feel that way about "ecology/nature." □

Brief Reviews



HAPPY ENDING by Francesca Duranti. Random House, \$17.95. As the title implies, Ms. Duranti's novel is a romantic comedy. It concerns a group of rich aristocrats on a Tuscan estate where they inhabit the big house, the lesser house, and the least house, leading one character to mention the three bears. Over the wall is a freakish building with a tower from which their dear friend and admirer observes proceedings through binoculars. Most of these people are gently daft and seemingly as fixed in their absurd positions as the patio paving stones. Then Goldilocks, in the shape of a young man of ethereal good looks and no conversation at all, turns up and shakes them all loose. This pleasant tale is told with intelligence and grace that lift it above the saccharine level to which it might easily have fallen.

SERMONS IN STONE by Susan Allport, illustrations by David Howell. Norton, \$19.95. In 1871 the Department of Agriculture was moved to measure fences all across the country. In New England and New York were found 252,539 miles of stone walls, and many of those miles are still around—some carefully preserved, some collapsed into mere disorderly lines of rocks but still there, as anyone who tries a hike through seemingly wild woods soon learns. Ms. Allport has dug into the history of stone walls—who built them, and when, and why, and how—and has found surprising and intriguing information. She convincingly dismisses pre-Columbian Europeans as builders of either walls or the odd stone structures sometimes found in the area, but has found evidence that some Indian groups were employed by English settlers to build walls and were highly regarded for a skill that few of the English could have brought with them. Possibly only wall buffs will truly ap-

preciate Ms. Allport's history, but it may make wall buffs of previously indifferent readers who encounter it.

VICTORIES by George V. Higgins. Holt, \$19.95. Mr. Higgins's new novel begins where his *Trust* ended, with Ed Cobb, a Democratic politician in Vermont, plotting to stir up a little party interest by actually running a candidate against the incumbent Republican congressman. Nothing of the sort, in a district where "even the cows vote Republican," has happened for years, because the incumbent, a totally honest old Yankee skinflint, has been in Washington time out of mind, and while he has never done anything worth mentioning for his district, he has never rocked any of its boats either. There is no hope of beating the man. What Cobb needs is a sacrificial lamb, and he catches one by discreet blackmail. The lamb is Henry Briggs, a retired baseball pitcher of considerable reputation, currently employed as a game warden. He is a good warden, liked even by the incorrigible local poacher, and with no visible enemies—barring his wife. As the campaign preliminaries unfold, Mr. Higgins discusses small-town grudges, pointless political feuds, rural poverty, greedy bankers, stupid policemen, unreasonable game laws, and arrogant campaign managers, throwing in a few other nuisances along the way. These are all targets worthy of indignant editorials. It is Mr. Higgins's great skill as a novelist that converts them into convincing people conducting believable actions with profane and amusing garrulity.

PATRIMONY by Philip Roth. Simon & Schuster, \$19.95. In ostensibly writing of his father's decline and death, Mr. Roth has in fact created two character studies, one of the conscientious, hardworking, maddeningly dictatorial parent with sound intelligence but little education, the other of himself, the sometimes resentful but always respectful son whose college training and literary success have produced a certain "automatic brand of elevated stupidity" in dealing with the old man. The tension between generations is conveyed quietly but vividly, as is the shock that comes when that tension relaxes. Mr. Roth reports saying "four words that I'd never uttered to him be-

fore in my life. . . . 'Do as I say,' I tell him—and he does it. The end of an era. . . ."

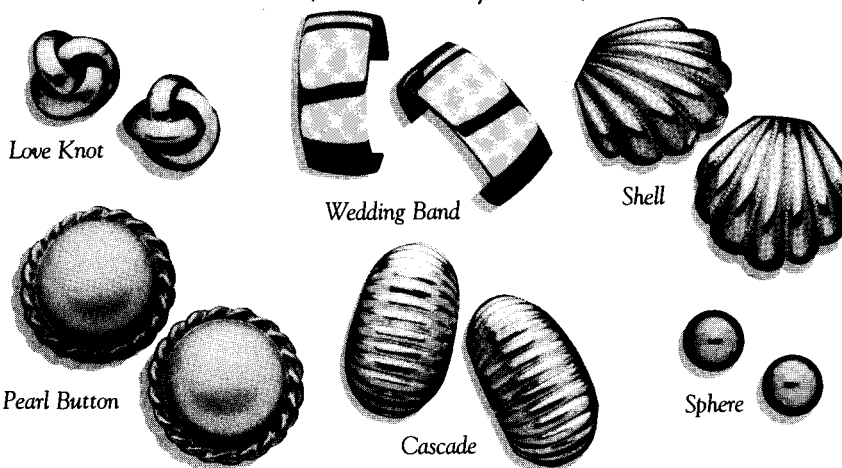
THE LAST VOYAGE OF SOMEBODY THE SAILOR by John Barth. Little, Brown, \$21.95. One can imagine that Mr. Barth's first notion here was a question: What would Sinbad and his contemporaries at the court of Haroun al-Rashid have made of the equipment and misadventures of a modern yachtsman? On that keel Mr. Barth has built a Walloping Windowblind of a novel that lurches from present to past, from New Jersey to Serendib, from ornate erotica to bloody piracy, seldom making much sense but never quite falling into the doldrums. The novel's complicated construction and its elaborate prose imply serious purpose, but none emerges in all its 573 pages.

THE FORGOTTEN HERMITAGE OF SKELLIG MICHAEL by Walter Horn, Jenny White Marshall, and Grellan D. Rourke, with Paddy O'Leary and Lee Snodgrass. University of California, \$39.95. Skellig Michael is an island off the coast of County Kerry. It consists of two windswept, savagely rocky crags devoid of water or trees, and is altogether the sort of place that nobody with an interest in comfort or safety would willingly set foot on. Early Irish ascetics, having no interest in either, established a monastery on the lower crag sometime between the sixth and eighth centuries. The authors were engaged in a thorough study of the monastic ruins, but meanwhile noticed stonework on the higher crag. This they examined (at considerable risk of inadvertent suicide) and identified as the remains of a hermitage not mentioned in any available records. The hermit, whoever he was, must have had extensive support from the monastery, for the stonework supporting three terraces, and the steps and grips cut into rock faces, cannot possibly have been done except by a sizable, and capable, crew. The authors do not claim full understanding of the place, but in describing it and speculating about it they provide much information on early Christianity in Ireland. The numerous photographs are handsome but cannot be recommended to acrophobics.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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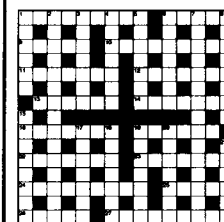
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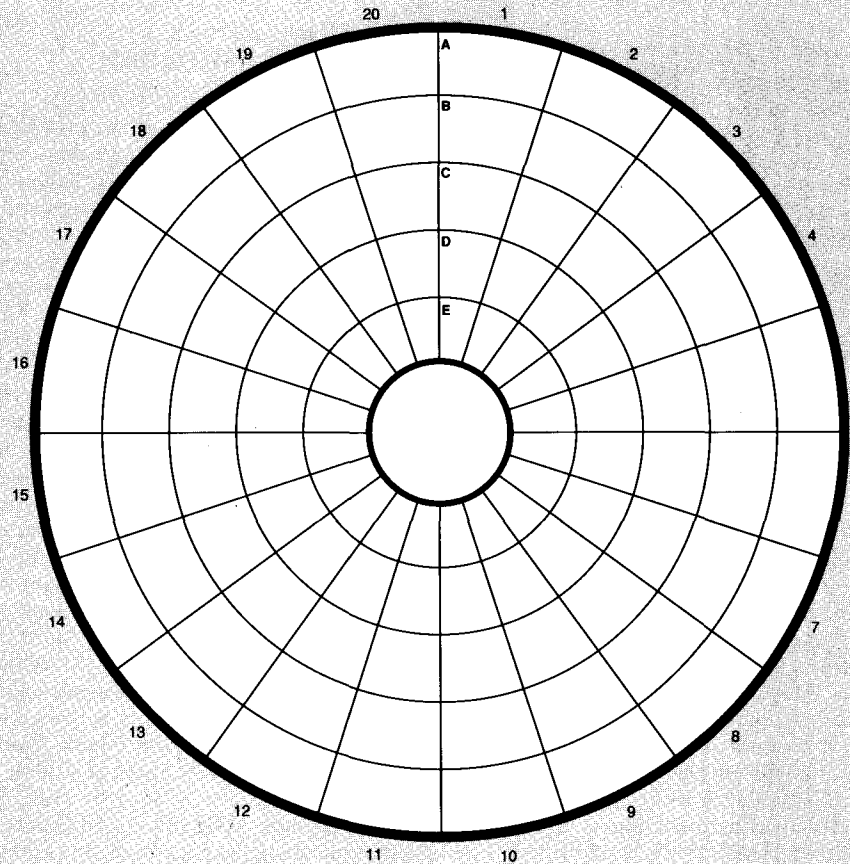
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

COMPACT DISC

In this disc, each Radial word 1–20 is to be entered with its letters in *mixed order*. To fix the positions of these letters, Concentric words occur in each ring A–E. The Concentric words are clued in order and proceed clockwise starting from sector 1 in each ring. Some extra music is crammed into this compact disc. That is to say, five Radial words are one letter too long for their sectors and must pack two letters into one space. Each ring contains one instance of this packing; taken from ring A inward to ring E, the five pairs of letters compose a musical phrase appropriate to our compact disc. Answer lengths are not given for the Radial clues. Two answers are proper nouns.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 118.



RADIAL

1. Compact disc's ultimate advance
2. Your tin ear initially muffles Beethoven's Fifth
3. Dumb string-player talk-show host rejected
4. Play a trumpet loud and long, in nude
5. Drink Dvorak tossed right out
6. Muppet number in canal of song
7. Furnishes Latin finales
8. Dance observed in many pieces
9. Start off "Earth Song"
10. Transposed rag on keyboard
11. Bagpipers' gear left in tool sets
12. After awful din, is guitar string held?
13. Monotonous music Nero fiddled after five centuries in Rome
14. Fruit that can be instrumental in doing our dance
15. Plain record in E minor is flipped
16. Playing last E flat
17. Big Elgar flops
18. Badly want run in lines of sheet music
19. Mighty peculiar Top Ten
20. Hooters' sounds, except one

CONCENTRIC

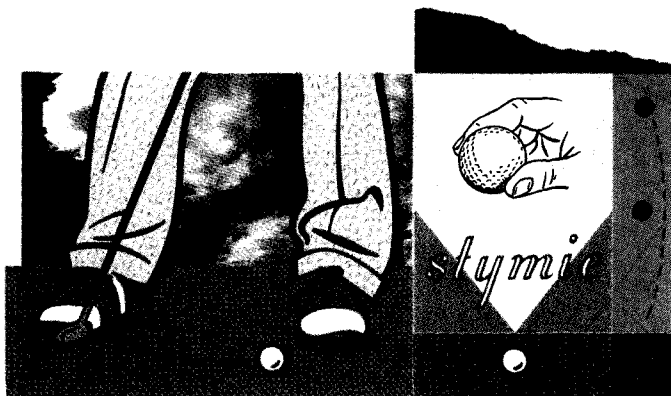
- A. 1. Made some guitar music pack into compact disc (7)
2. More sprightly and free during "Shake" (8)
3. To Segovia, the flat number (6)
- B. 1. Hootenanny gains rap following (8)
2. Blues instruments getting worn out (8)
3. Pitch pipe's first small coverings (5)
- C. 1. What listeners found in chime practicing (10)
2. Spies jug-band percussion upon return (6)
3. In audience, grabs breaks during the music (5)
- D. 1. Jazz pianist covering bop-styled Elvis features? (8)
2. Heard flattening, sharpening (7)
3. Let go a burst played smoothly (6)
- E. 1. Make sense of one French composer (7)
2. Arranged most of key in gospel (6)
3. Steady hum from sax interrupting feast (8) (*two words*)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER



stymie

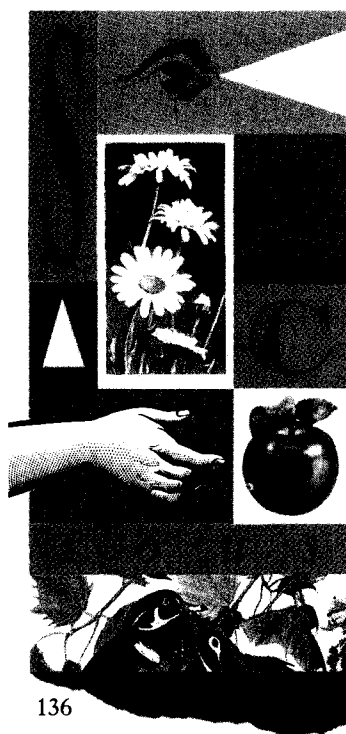
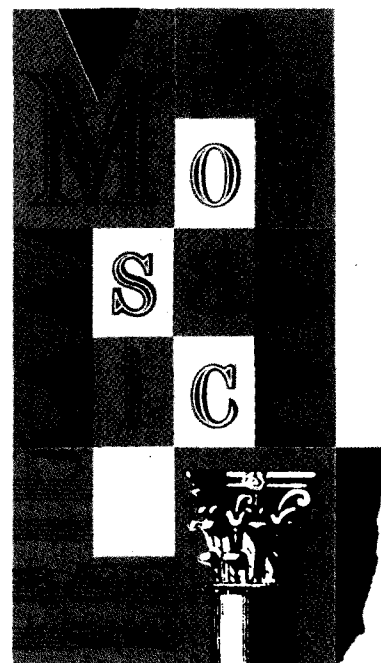
Referring last September to what he hoped would be a new era of Soviet-American cooperation, President Bush asserted, "No longer can a dictator count on East-West confrontation to *stymie* concerted U.N. action against aggression." The dictator in question, of course, was Saddam Hussein. The earliest known root of *stymie* is *stime* or *styme* ("a very small quantity or particle"), originally an Old Scottish word. In subsequent combination with the suffix *-ie* ("one of a kind or quality," as in *toughie*, *smartie*), the word came to refer to a person with poor vi-

sion. *Stymie* was then adopted as a golfing term for the situation in which another ball lands on the green directly between a player's ball and the hole, so as to obstruct the player's putt. The golfer could use an iron to make the ball jump over the obstructing ball, or could put spin on the ball, so that it would curve around the opponent's. These difficult countermeasures became unnecessary in 1952, when players were first allowed to mark the position of balls on the green and *stymies* were abolished. The figurative meaning of *stymie* (to impede, obstruct, frustrate, thwart) was by then already well established.

mosaic

During the Senate confirmation hearings on Judge David Souter's nomination to the Supreme Court, Senator Paul Simon, of Illinois, worried about the effects of Souter's "rather insulated life." Simon elaborated: "I want to sense a capacity to grow—how he thinks. It's all a *mosaic*, with his legal opinions only a part of it." Simon's metaphor invokes not Moses or Mosaic law but the Muses. *Mosaics* (pictures or designs made by inlaying colored pieces in mortar) were known in Late Latin as *opus musivum*, literally "work of the Muses," because, according to Pliny the Elder, the inlaid or tessellated floors were used in grottoes consecrated to the Muses. The Muses are also invoked in the words *museum*, which is from the Greek *Mouseion* (library, place of study), originally "a seat or shrine of the Muses," and *music*, which comes from the Latin *musica*, shortened from the original Greek *mousike technē* (art of the Muses). According to Hesiod,

Mnemosyne (the goddess of memory) was the mother of the nine Muses, which some lexicographers suggest is evidence that the Greek *Mousa* (Muse), from pre-Hellenic **montya*, is ultimately from the Indo-European root **mon-* (to think, remember).



specious

Owing in part to the "Meat Stinks!" anti-meat campaign launched last summer by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the awkward term *speciesism* ("Speciesism is the presumption that humans are superior to other sentient creatures and therefore entitled to eat them"—Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 1975) is increasingly being seen and heard in the media. Lobbyists for the meat industry, and many chefs, are up in arms. "Should I stop swatting flies?" Julia Child asked. "Should I invite mice into my kitchen and serve them lunch? This speciesism is *specious*." Both *species* and *specious* can be traced back to the Indo-European root *spek-* (to observe), which is also

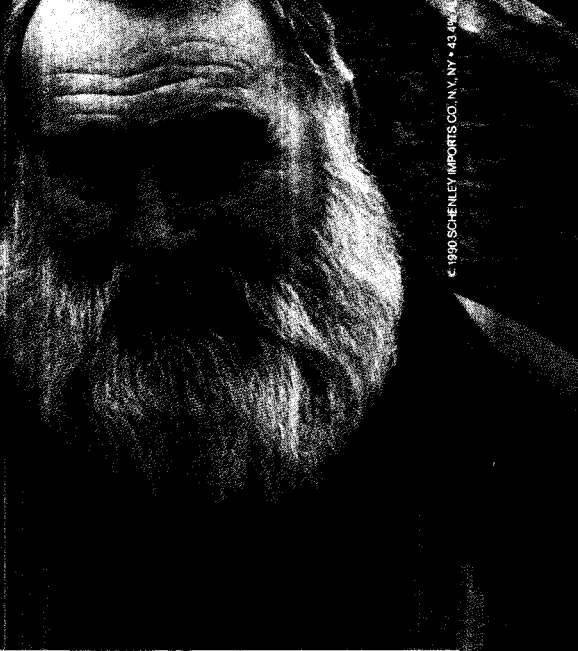
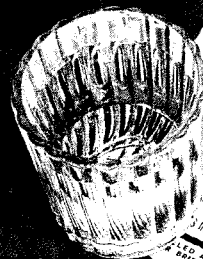
the source of many other English words, including, through Proto-Germanic, *spy* and *espionage*; through Greek, *scope*, *telescope*, *horoscope*, *bishop*, and *episcopal*; and through Latin, *specimen*, *spectacle*, *spectrum*, *speculate*, *aspect*, *auspice*, *circumspect*, *conspicuous*, *despise*, *expect*, *inspect*, *respect*, *respite*, and *suspect*. *Spek-* became in Latin *specere* (to look, behold), whose meaning was extended in the Latin word *species* to cover "appearance, form, kind or type of form." *Species* (kind or type) was then adopted directly into English to denote a class of individuals with common traits. In Latin itself, *species* (appearance) yielded *speciosus* (fair appearance, pleasing to the eye, beautiful), which English adopted with the same meaning ("Yet the wise men of

Greece were not ashamed to pursue *specious* boyes"—John Gaule, *The Magastromancer*, 1652). When used to describe flowers or birds it meant "having gaudy or showy coloring" ("The novice in botany, who is attracted, perhaps, only by what is *specious* in the plant or flower"—Patrick Keith, *A Botanical Lexicon*, 1837). Calling plants' flowers or birds' feathers *specious* implied mere outward or superficial show, giving *specious* the sense "deceptively attractive" ("Let not the *specious* goodness of the end encourage me to the unlawfulness of the means"—Francis Quarles, *Judgement and Mercy*, 1644). This meaning was then applied to reasoning and arguments that were apparently plausible or sound but in reality fallacious.

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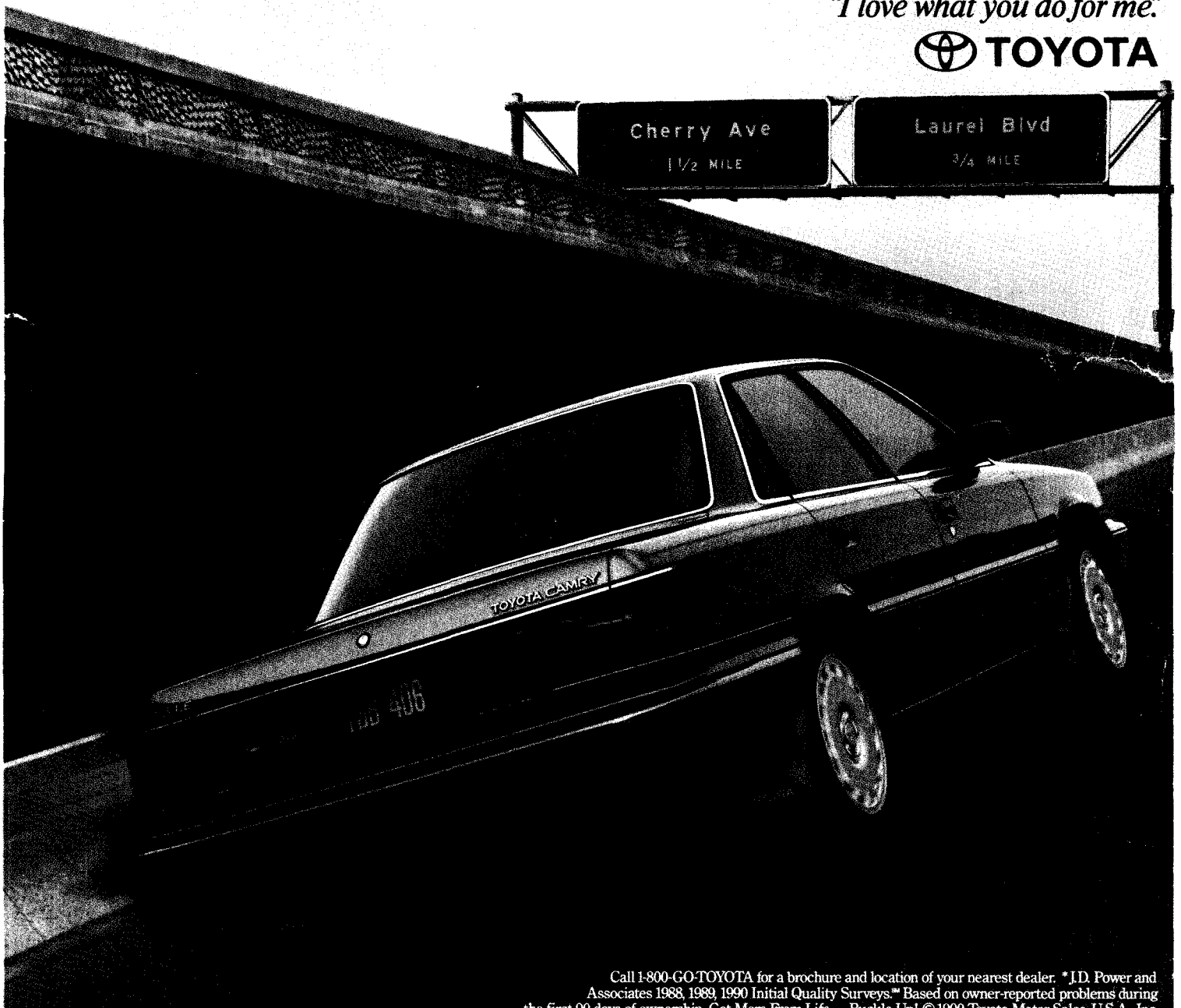
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